The Charm Of Ireland

Burton E. Stevenson

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THE CHARM OF IRELAND

TWO TINY CONNAUGHT TOILERS

See page 356

The Charm of Ireland

By

Burton E. Stevenson

Author of "The Spell of Holland," "The Mystery of the Boule Cabinet," etc.

With many Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

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TO

J. I. B.

THIS BOOK

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THE CHARM OF IRELAND

CHAPTER I

DUBLIN'S SATURDAY NIGHT

TWILIGHT was at hand when the little steamer, slender as a greyhound, cast loose from the pier at Holyhead, made its way cautiously out past the breakwater, and then, gathering speed, headed away across the Irish Sea, straight toward the setting sun.

The boat showed many evidences that the Irish Sea can be savage when it chooses. Everything movable about the decks was carefully lashed down; there were railings and knotted ropes everywhere to cling to; and in the saloon the table-racks were set ready at hand, as though they had just been used, and might be needed again at any moment. But, on this Saturday evening in late May, the sea was in a pleasant, even a jovial, mood, with just enough swell to send a thin shower of spray across the deck from time to time, and lend exhilaration to the rush of the fleet little turbine.

There were many boats in sight—small ones, for the most part, rolling and pitching apparently much worse than we; and then the gathering darkness obscured them one by one, and presently all that was left of them were the bobbing white lights at their mastheads. A biting chill crept into the air, and Betty finally sought refuge from it in the saloon, while I made my way back to the smoking-room, hoping for a friendly pipe with some one.

I was attracted at once by a rosy-faced old priest,

sitting at one of the corner tables. He was smoking a black, well-seasoned briar, and he bade me a cheery good-evening as I dropped into the seat beside him.

"You would be from America," he said, watching me as I filled up.

"Yes," I answered. "From Ohio."

"Ah, I know Ohio well," and he looked at me with new interest, "though for many years I have been in Illinois."

"But you were born in Ireland?"

"I was so; near Tuam. I am going back now for a visit."

"Have you been away long?"

"More than thirty years," he said, and took a few reflective puffs.

"No doubt you will find many changes," I ventured.

But he shook his head. "I am thinking I shall find Tuam much as I left it," he said. "There are not many changes in Ireland, even in thirty years. 'Tis not like America. I am afraid I shall have to give up smoking while I am there," he added, with a little sigh.

"Give up smoking?" I echoed. "But why?"

"They do not like their priests to smoke in Ireland."

I was astonished. I had no suspicion that Irish priests were criticised for little things like that. In fact, I had somewhere received the impression that they were above criticism of every kind—dictators, in short, no act of whose was questioned. My companion laughed when I told him this.

"That is not so at all," he said. "Every priest, of

course, has authority in spiritual matters; but if he has any authority outside of that, it is because his people trust him. And before they'll trust him, he must deserve it. There is no people in the world so critical, so suspicious, or so sharp-sighted as the Irish. Take this matter of smoking, now. All Irishmen smoke, and yet there is a feeling that it is not the right thing for a priest. For myself, I see no harm in it. My pipe is a fine companion in the long evenings, when I am often lonely. But of course I can't do anything that would be making the people think less of me," and he knocked his pipe out tenderly and put it sadly in his pocket, refusing my proffered pouch.

"You will have to take a few whiffs up the chimney occasionally," I suggested.

His faded blue eyes lit up with laughter.

"Ah, I have done that same before this," he said, with a little chuckle. "That would be while I was a student at Maynooth, and a wild lot we were. There was a hole high up in the wall where the stove-pipe used to go, and we boys would draw a table under it, and stand on the table, and smoke up the chimney, turn and turn about," and he went on to tell me of those far-off days at Maynooth, which is the great Catholic college of Ireland, and of his first visit to America, and his first sight of Niagara Falls, and of how he had finally decided to enter the priesthood after long uncertainty; and then presently some one came to the door and said the lights of the Irish coast could be seen ahead, and we went out to look at them.

Far away, a little to the right, a strong level shaft of light told of a lighthouse. It was the famous Bailey

light, at the foot of the Hill of Howth, so one of the deckhands said; and then, still farther off, another light began to wink and wink, and then a third that swept its level beam across the sea, stared one full in the eye for an instant, and then swept on; and then more lights and more—the green and red ones marking the entrance to the harbour; and finally the lights of Kingstown itself stretched away to the left like a string of golden beads. And then we were in the harbour; and then we were beside the pier; and then Betty and I and the "chocolate-drop"—as we had named the brown English wrap-up which had done such yeoman service in Holland that we had vowed never to travel without it,—went down the gang-plank, and were in Ireland!

There is always a certain excitement, a certain exhilaration, in setting foot for the first time in any country; but when that country is Ireland, the Island of the Saints, the home of heroic legend and history more heroic still, the land with a frenzy for freedom yet never free—well, it was with a mist of happiness before our eyes that we crossed the pier and sought seats in the boat-train.

It is only five or six miles from Kingstown to Dublin, so that at the end of a very few minutes our train stopped in the Westland Row station, where a fevered mob of porters and hotel runners was in waiting; and then, after most of the passengers and luggage had been disgorged, and a guard had come around and collected twopence from me for some obscure reason I did not attempt to fathom, went on again, along a viaduct above gleaming streets murmurous with people, and

across the shining Liffey, to the station at Amiens Street, which was our destination.

Our hotel, I knew, was only two or three blocks away, and the prospect of traversing on foot the crowded streets which we had glimpsed from the train was not to be resisted; so I told the guard we wanted a man to carry our bags, and he promptly yelled at a ragamuffin, who was drifting past along the platform.

"Here!" he called. "Take the bags for the gintleman. Look sharrup, now!"

But there was no need to tell him to look sharp, for he sprang toward me eagerly, his face alight with joy at the prospect of earning a few pennies—maybe sixpence—perhaps even a shilling!

"Where is it you'd be wantin' to go, sir?" he asked, and touched his cap.

I named the hotel.

"It's in Sackville Street," I added. "That's not far, is it?"

"'Tis just a step, sir," he protested, and picked up the bags and was off, we after him.

It was long past eleven o'clock, but when we got down to the street, we found it thronged with a crowd for which the sidewalks were much too narrow, and which eddied back and forth and in and out of the shops like waves of the sea. We looked into their faces as we went along, and saw that they were good-humoured faces, unmistakably Irish; their voices were soft and the rise and fall of the talk was very sweet and gentle; but most of them were very shabby, and many of them undeniably dirty, and some had celebrated Saturday evening by taking a glass too much.

They were not drunk—and I may as well say here that I did not see what I would call a drunken man all the time I was in Ireland—but they were happy and uplifted, and required rather more room to walk than they would need on Monday morning.

Our porter, meanwhile, was ploughing through the crowd ahead of us like a ship through the sea, swinging a bag in either hand, quite regardless of the shins of the passers-by, and we were hard put to it to keep him in sight. It was farther than I had thought, but presently I saw a tall column looming ahead which I recognised as the Nelson Pillar, and I assured Betty that we were nearly there, for I knew that our hotel was almost opposite the Pillar. Our porter, however, crossed a broad street, which I was sure must be Sackville Street, without pausing, and continued at top speed straight ahead. We followed him for some moments; but the street grew steadily darker and more deserted, and finally I sprinted ahead and stopped him.

"Look here," I said. "We don't want to keep on walking all night. How much farther is the hotel?"

He set down the bags and mopped his dripping face with his sleeve.

"I'm not quite sure, sir," he said, looking about him.

"I don't believe it is up this way at all," I protested. "It's back there on Sackville Street."

"It is, sir," he agreed cheerfully, and picked up the bags again and started back.

"That *is* Sackville Street, isn't it?" I asked.

"Sure, I don't know, sir."

"Don't know?" I echoed, and stared at him. "Don't you know where the hotel is?"

"You see, sir, I'm a stranger in Dublin, like yourself," he explained.

"Well, why on earth didn't you say so?" I demanded.

He didn't answer; but of course I realised instantly why he hadn't said so. If he had, he wouldn't have got the job. That was what he was afraid of. In fact, he was afraid, even yet, that I would take the bags away from him and get some one else to carry them. I didn't do that, but I took command of the expedition.

"Come along," I said. "You follow me."

"Thank you, sir," he said, his face lighting up again, and fell in behind us.

As we retraced our steps, I tried to figure out how he had expected to find the hotel by plunging straight ahead without asking the way of any one, and for how long, if I had not stopped him, he would have kept on walking. Perhaps he had expected to keep going round and round until some good fairy led him to our destination.

At the corner of Sackville Street, I saw a policeman's helmet looming high above the crowd, and I went to him and asked the way, while our porter waited in the background. Perhaps he was afraid of policemen, or perhaps it was just the instinctive Irish dislike of them. This particular one bent a benignant face down upon us from his altitude of something over six feet, and in a moment set us right. The hotel was only a few steps away. The door was locked, and I had to ring, and while we were waiting, our porter looked about him with a bewildered face.

"What name was it you gave this street, sir?" he asked, at last.

"Sackville Street," I answered, and pointed for confirmation to the sign at the corner, very plain under the electric light.

From the vacant look he gave it I knew he couldn't read; but he scratched his head perplexedly.

"A friend of mine told me 'twas O'Connell Street," he said finally, and I paid him and dismissed him without realising that I had been brought face to face with the age-long conflict between English officialism and Irish patriotism.

Ten minutes later, I opened the window of our room and found myself looking out at Lord Nelson, leaning sentimentally on his sword on top of his pillar —posing as he so often did when he found himself in the limelight. Far below, the street still hummed with life, although it was near midnight. The pavements were crowded, side-cars whirled hither and thither, some of the shops had not yet closed. Dublin certainly seemed a gay town.

CHAPTER II

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF AN ANCIENT CAPITAL

I KNOW Dublin somewhat better now, and I no longer think of it as a gay town—rather as a supremely tragic one. Turn the corner from any of the main thoroughfares, and you will soon find yourself in a foul alley of crowded tenements, in the midst of a misery and squalor that wring the heart. You will wonder to see women laughing together and children playing on the damp pavements. It is thin laughter and half-hearted play; and yet, even here, there is a certain air of carelessness and good-humour. It may be that these miserable people do not realise their misery. Cleanliness is perhaps as painful to a person reared in dirt as dirt is to a person reared in cleanliness; slum dwellers, I suppose, do not notice the slum odour; a few decades of slum life must inevitably destroy or, at least, deaden those niceties of smell and taste and feeling which play so large a part in the lives of the well-to-do. And it is fortunate that this is so. But one threads one's way along these squalid streets, shuddering at thought of the vice and disease that must be bred there, and mourning, not so much for their unfortunate inhabitants, as for the blindness and inefficiency of the social order which permits them to exist.

These appalling alleys are always in the background of my thoughts of Dublin; and yet it is not them I see

when I close my eyes and evoke my memory of that ancient town. The picture which comes before me then is of the wide O'Connell Bridge, with the great monument of the Liberator guarding one end of it, and the curving street beyond, sweeping past the tall portico of the old Parliament House, past the time-stained buildings of Trinity College, and so on along busy Grafton Street to St. Stephen's Green. This is the most beautiful and characteristic of Dublin's vistas; and one visualises it instinctively when one thinks of Dublin, just as one visualises the boulevards and the Avenue de l'Opera when one thinks of Paris, or the Dam and the Kalverstraat when one thinks of Amsterdam, or the Strand and Piccadilly when one thinks of London.

It was in this direction that our feet turned, that bright Sunday morning, when we sallied forth for the first time to see the town, and we were impressed almost at once by two things: the unusual height of Dublin policemen and the eccentric attitudes of Dublin statues. There are few finer bodies of men in the world than the Royal Irish Constabulary. They are as spruce and erect as grenadiers; throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, I never saw a fat one. They are recruited all over the island, and the tallest ones must be selected for the Dublin service. At any rate, they tower a full head above the average citizen of that town, and, in consequence, there is always one or more of them in sight.

As for the statues, they sadly lack repose. The O'Connell Monument is a riot of action, though the Liberator himself is comparatively cool and self-pos-

DUBLIN CASTLE

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O'CONNELL, ALIAS SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN

sessed. Just beyond the bridge, Smith O'Brien poses with leg advanced and head flung back and arms proudly folded in the traditional attitude of haughty defiance; opposite him, Henry Grattan stands with hand outstretched midway of an eloquent period; and, as you explore the streets, you will see other patriots in bronze or marble doing everything but what they should be doing: standing quietly and making the best of a bad job. For to stand atop a shaft of stone and endure the public gaze eternally *is* a bad job, even for a statue. But a good statue conceals its feeling of absurdity and ennui under a dignified exterior. Most Dublin ones do not. They are visibly irked and impatient.

I mentioned this interesting fact, one evening, to a Dublin woman of my acquaintance, and she laughed.

"'Tis true they are impatient," she agreed. "But perhaps they will quiet down once the government stops calling O'Connell Street by a wrong name."

"Where *is* O'Connell Street?" I asked, for I had failed to notice it.

"Your hotel faces it; but the government names it after a viceroy whom nobody has thought of for a hundred years."

It was then I understood the confusion of the man who had carried our bags up from the station; for to every good Irishman Sackville Street is always O'Connell Street, in honour of the patriot whose monument adorns it. That it is still known officially as Sackville Street is probably due to the inertia of a government always suspicious of change, rather than to any desire to honour a forgotten viceroy, or hesitation to add

another leaf to O'Connell's crown of laurel. O'Connell himself, in some critical quarters, is not quite the idol he once was; but Irishmen agree that the wide and beautiful street which is the centre of Dublin should be named after him, and his monument, at one end of it, is still the natural rallying-place for the populace, whose orators love to illustrate their periods by pointing to the figure of Erin breaking her fetters at its base.

At the other end of the street is a very noble memorial of another patriot—Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell's fame burns brighter and clearer with the passing years, and this memorial, so simple, so dignified, and yet so full of meaning, is one which no American can contemplate without a thrill of pride, for it is the work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens—a consummate artist, American to the marrow, though Dublin-born, of a French father and an Irish mother.

Midway of this great thoroughfare, rises the Nelson Pillar—a fluted column springing a hundred and fifty feet into the air, dominating the whole town. I do not understand why Nelson should have been so signally honoured in the Irish capital, for there was nothing Irish about him, either in birth or temperament. Perhaps that is the reason. Stranger things have happened in Ireland. And indeed it is no stranger than the whim which set another statue to face the old Parliament House—a gilded atrocity representing William of Orange, garbed as a Roman emperor in laurel-wreath and toga, bestriding a sway-backed horse!

The Home Rule Parliament will no doubt promptly change the street signs along the broad thoroughfare

which forms the heart of Dublin; but meanwhile everybody agrees in calling the bridge O'Connell's monument faces by his name. A very handsome bridge it is, and there is a beautiful view from it, both up and down the river. Dublin is like Paris, in that it is built on both sides of a river, and the view from this point reminds one somewhat of the view along the Seine. There are many bridges, and many domed buildings, many boats moored to the quays—and many patient fishermen waiting for a bite!

A short distance beyond the bridge is the great granite structure with curving façade and rain-blackened columns, a queer but impressive jumble of all the Greek orders, which now houses the Bank of Ireland. Time was when it housed the Irish Parliament, and that time may come again; meanwhile it stands as a monument to the classical taste of the eighteenth century and its fondness for allegorical sculpture—Erin supported by Fidelity and Commerce, and Fortitude supported by Justice and Liberty! Those seem to me to be mixed allegories, but never mind.

Those later days of the eighteenth century were the days of Dublin's glory, for then she was really, as well as sentimentally, the capital of Ireland. Her most beautiful public buildings date from that period, and all her fine spacious dwelling-houses. After the Union, nobody built wide spacious dwellings, but only narrow mean ones, to suit the new spirit; and the new spirit was so incapable of living in the lovely old houses that it turned them into tenements, and put a family in every room, without any sense of crowding! I sometimes fear that the old spirit is gone for good, and

that not even independence can bring it back to Dublin.

It was the Irish House of Commons which, in 1752, provided the funds for the new home of Trinity College, just across the street—a great pile of time-worn buildings, also in the classic style, and rather dull; but it is worth while to go in through the great gateway for a look at the outer and inner quadrangles.

Beyond the college stretches Grafton Street, the principal shopping-street of Dublin, and at its head is St. Stephen's Green, a pretty park, with some beautiful eighteenth century houses looking down upon it. This was the centre of the fashionable residence district in the old days, and the walk along the north side was the "Beaux Walk." Such of the residences as remain are mostly given over to public purposes, and the square itself is redolently British; for there is a statue of George II in the centre, and one of Lord Eglinton not far away, and a triumphal arch commemorating the war in South Africa. But, if you look closely, you may find the inconspicuous bust of James Clarence Mangan, who coughed his life out in the Dublin slums while Tom Moore—who was also born here—was posing before fine London ladies; and Mangan had this reward, that he remained sincere and honest and warmly Irish to the last, a true bard of Erin, and one whose memory she does well to cherish. How feeble Tom Moore's tinklings sound beside the white passion of "Dark Rosaleen!"

> Over dews, over sands,
> Will I fly for your weal:

Your holy, delicate white hands
  Shall girdle me with steel.
At home in your emerald bowers,
  From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
  My dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
You'll think of me through daylight's hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
  My dark Rosaleen!

A short walk down Kildare Street leads to a handsome, wide-flung building with a court in front, once the mansion of the Duke of Leinster, but now occupied by the Royal Dublin Society. The wing at the right is the Science and Art Museum, that to the left the National Library. The latter is scarcely worth a visit, unless there is some reading you wish to do, but we shall have to spend some hours in the museum.

On this Sunday morning, however, Betty and I walked on through to Leinster Lawn, a pleasant enclosed square, with gravelled walks and gardens gay with flowers, but marred with many statues; and here you will note that a Victorian government spent a huge sum in commemorating the virtues of the Prince Consort. We contemplated it for a while, and then went on to the great building which closes in the park on the north, and which houses the National Gallery of Ireland. We found the collection surprisingly good. It is especially rich in Dutch art, and possesses three Rembrandts, one of an old and another of a young man, and the other showing some shepherds building a fire—just such a subject as Rembrandt loved. And

there is a good Teniers, and an inimitable canvas by Jan Steen, "The Village School." There are also a number of pictures by Italian masters, but these did not seem to me so noteworthy.

This general collection of paintings is on the upper floor. The ground floor houses the National Portrait Gallery, composed for the most part of mediocre presentments of mediocre personalities, but with a high light here and there worth searching for. Sir Godfrey Kneller's portrait of Dick Steele is there, and Holbein's Henry Wyatt, and Zuccaro's Raleigh, and there are three or four portraits by Lely and Reynolds, but not, I should say, in their best style.

Let me add here that there is in Dublin another picture gallery well worth a visit. This is the Municipal Gallery, housed in a beautiful old mansion in Harcourt Street—another memorial of spacious eighteenth century days, where that famous judge and duellist, Lord Clonmell, lived. The house itself would be worth seeing, even if there were no pictures in it, for it is a splendid example of Georgian domestic architecture; but there are, besides some beautiful examples of the Barbizon school, a number of modern Irish paintings which promise much for the future of Irish art.

The day was so bright and warm that it seemed a pity to spend the whole of it in town, so, after lunch, we took a tram for the Hill of Howth. Most of the tram lines of the city start from the Nelson Pillar, so we had only to cross the street to the starting point.

There seems to be a considerable difference of opinion as to the correct pronunciation of "Howth." Perhaps

that is because it is a Danish word—hoved, a head—the Danes having left the mark of their presence in the names of places all over Ireland, even in the names of three of its four provinces. Only far Connaught escaped the stigma. At any rate, when I asked a policeman which tram to take for Howth, I pronounced the word as it is spelt, to rhyme with "south." He corrected me at once.

"'Tis the Hill of Hooth ye mean," he said, making it rhyme with "youth," "and that's your tram yonder."

We clambered up the steep stairway at the back to a seat on top, and presently we started; and then the conductor came around with tickets, and asked where we were going—in Ireland, as everywhere else in Europe, the fare is gauged by the length of the journey.

"To the Hill of Hooth," I answered proudly.

"Ah, the Hill of Hōth, is it," he said, making it rhyme with "both," and he picked out the correct tickets from the assortment he carried, punched them and gave them to me.

We used the pronunciations indiscriminately, after that, and I never learned which is right, though I suspect that "Hōth" is.

Howth is a great detached block of mountain thrown down, by some caprice of nature, at the sea-ward edge of a level plain to the north of Dublin Bay, where it stands very bold and beautiful. It is some eight or ten miles from Dublin, and the tram thither runs through the north-eastern part of the town, and then emerges on the Strand, with Dublin Bay on one side and many handsome residences on the other. Away

across the bay are the beautiful green masses of the Wicklow hills, and presently you come to Clontarf, where, on Good Friday, nine hundred years ago, the Irish, under their great king, Brian Boru, met the marshalled legions of the Danes, and broke their power in Ireland.

For the Danes had sailed up the Liffey a century before, and built a castle to command the ford, somewhere near the site of the present castle; and about this stronghold grew up the city of Dublin; and then they built other forts to the south and north and west; bands of raiders marched to and fro over the country, plundering shrines, despoiling monasteries, levying tribute, until all Ireland, with the exception of the extreme west, crouched under the Danish power. The Danes, it should be remembered, were the terror and scourge of Europe, and since the Ireland of that day was the richest country of Europe in churches and monasteries and other religious establishments, it was upon Ireland the Pagan invaders left their deepest mark.

For a hundred years they had their will of the land, crushing down such weak and divided resistance as the people were able to offer. And then came Brian Boru, a man strong enough to draw all Ireland into one alliance, and at last the Danes met a resistance which made them pause. For twenty years, Brian waged desperate war against them, defeating them sometimes, sometimes defeated; but never giving up, though often besought to do so; retiring to his bogs until he could recruit his shattered forces, and then, as soon as might be, falling again upon his enemies.

In the intervals of this warfare, he devoted himself to setting his kingdom in order, and to such good purpose that, as the historians tell—and Tom Moore rhymes—a lone woman could make the circuit of Erin, without fear of molestation, though decked with gold and jewels. Brian did more than that—and this is the measure of his greatness: he built roads, erected churches and monasteries to replace those destroyed by the Danes, founded schools to which men came from far countries, and "sent professors and masters to teach wisdom and knowledge and to buy books beyond the sea."

It was in 1014 that the final great battle of Clontarf was fought. Both sides, realising that this was the decisive struggle, had mustered every man they could. With Brian were his own Munster men, and the forces of O'Rourke and Hy Many from Connaught, and Malachy with his Meath legions, and Desmond with the men of Kerry and West Cork—a wild host, with discipline of the rudest, trusting for victory not to strategy or tactics, but to sheer strength of arm.

And what a muster of Danes there was! Not only the Danes of Dublin, but the hosts from the Orkneys and "from every island on the Scottish main, from Uist to Arran"; and even from far-off Scandinavia and Iceland the levies hastened, led by "Thornstein, Hall of the Side's son, and Halldor, son of Gudmund the Powerful, and many other northern champions of lesser note." It is characteristic of Irish history through the ages that, on this great day, one Irish province cast in its lot with its country's enemies, for the battalions of Leinster formed side by side with the Danes.

There are Danish and Irish sagas which tell the story of that fight, and blood-stirring tales they are. Brian Boru, bent under the weight of seventy-four years, took station apart on a bit of rising ground, and there, kneeling on a cushion, alternately prayed and watched the battle. The Danes had the better of it, at first, hewing down their adversaries with their gleaming axes; but the Munster men stood firm and fought so savagely that at last the Danes broke and fled. One party of them passed the little hill where Brian knelt, and paused long enough to cut him down; but his life's work was done: the power of the Danes was broken, and there was no longer need to fear that the Norsemen would rule Ireland.

Just north of Clontarf parish church stands an ancient yew, and tradition says that it was under this tree that Brian's body was laid by his men. The tradition may be true or not, but the wonderful tree, the most venerable in Ireland, is worth turning aside a few moments to visit. It stands in private grounds, and permission must be asked to enter, but it is seldom refused.

Like too many other spots in Ireland, Clontarf has its tragic memory as well as its glorious one, for it was here that O'Connell's Home Rule movement, to which thousands of men had pledged fealty, dropped suddenly to pieces because of the indecision of its leader at the first hint of British opposition. But there is no need to tell that story here.

The town of Howth consists of one long street running around the base of the hill and facing the harbour

and the Irish Sea. The harbour is enclosed by impressive piers of granite, and was once a busy place, for it was the Dublin packet station until Kingstown superseded it. Since then, the entrance has silted up, and now nothing rides at anchor there but small yachts and fishing-boats. On that clear and sunny day the view was very beautiful. A mile to the north was the rugged little island known as Ireland's Eye, and far away beyond the long stretch of low coast loomed the purple masses of the Carlingford hills. Away to the east stretched the Irish Sea, greenish-grey in the sunlight, with a white foam-crest here and there, and to the south lay Dublin Bay against the background of the Wicklow mountains.

High on a cliff above the haven lie the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey, and we presently clambered up to them. We found them encircled by an embattled wall, but a neighbourhood urchin directed us to a pile of tumble-down buildings at the corner as the home of the caretaker. He was not there, but his wife was, as well as a large collection of ragged children, and one of these, a girl of ten or thereabouts, was sent by her mother to do the honours. She was very shy at first, but her tongue finally loosened, and we were enraptured with her soft voice and beautiful accent. Her father was a fisherman, she said; they were all fisher-families who lived in the tumble-down pile, which was once a part of the abbey and so comes legitimately by its decay, since it is four or five hundred years old, and has apparently never been repaired.

Of the abbey church itself, only the walls remain, and they are the survivals of three distinct buildings.

The west front is part of the original Danish church, built in 1042, and is pierced by a small round-headed doorway, above which rises an open bell-turret. In 1235, the Archbishop of Dublin rebuilt the Danish church, retaining only its façade. The interior, as he remodelled it, consisted of a nave and one aisle, separated by three pointed arches. They are still there, very low and rude, marking the length of the Archbishop's church. Two centuries later, this was found too small, and so the church was lengthened by the addition of three more arches. They also are still standing, and are both higher and wider than the first three. The tracery in the east window is still intact, and is very graceful, as may be seen by the photograph opposite this page, in which the variation in the arches is also well shown. Note also the round-headed doorway at the side, with the remains of a porch in front—a detail not often seen in old Irish churches. And, last of all, note the ruined building in the corner. Although it has no roof, it is still used as a dwelling, as the curtained window shows.

Just inside the east window of the church is the tomb of Christopher, nineteenth Lord Howth, who died about 1490. It is an altar tomb, bearing the recumbent figures of the knight and his lady, the former's feet resting, after the usual fashion, on his dog. Considering the vicissitudes of weather and vandalism through which they have passed, both figures are surprisingly well preserved.

The Howth peninsula still belongs to the Howth family, who trace their line direct to Sir Almericus Tristram, an Anglo-Norman knight who conquered and

RUINS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY, HOWTH

annexed it in 1177, and the demesne, one of the most beautiful in Ireland, lies to the west of the town. The castle, a long, battlemented building flanked with towers, is said to contain many objects of interest, but we did not get in, for the gardener informed us that it was open to the public only on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The grounds are famous for their gorgeous rhododendrons, and there is a cromlech there, under which, so legend says, lies Aideen, wife of Oscar, son of Ossian and chief hero of those redoubtable warriors, the Fianna.

In Ireland, during the summer months, sunrise and sunset are eighteen hours apart, and so, though it was rather late when we got back to the hotel, it was as light as midday. We were starting for our room, when a many-buttoned bell-boy, with a face like a cherub, who was always hovering near, stopped us and told us shyly that, if we would wait a few minutes, we could see the parade go past.

During the morning, we had noticed gaily-uniformed bands marching hither and thither, convoying little groups of people, some of them in fancy costume, and had learned that there was to be a great labour celebration somewhere, with music and much oratory. We had not thought it worth while to run it down, but we said we should be glad to see the parade, so our guide took us out to the balcony on the first floor, and then remained to talk.

"You would be from America, sir, I'm thinking," he began.

"Yes," I said.

"Then you have seen Indians!"

"Indians? Why, yes, I've seen a few."

"On the war-path?" he cried, his eyes shining with excitement.

I couldn't help laughing.

"No," I said. "They don't go on the war-path any more. They're quite tame now."

His face fell.

"But you have seen cowboys?" he persisted.

"Only in Wild West Shows," I admitted. "That's where I have seen most of my Indians."

"They're brave lads, aren't they?" and his eyes were shining again.

"Why, have you seen them?" I questioned in surprise.

"Ah, I have, sir, many times, in the moving-pictures," he explained. "It must be a fine thing to live in America!"

I found out afterwards that the Wild West film is exceedingly popular in Ireland. No show is complete without one. I saw some, later on, and most sanguinary and impossible they were; but they were always wildly applauded, and I think most Irishmen believe that the life of the average American is largely employed in fighting Indians and rescuing damsels in distress. I tried to tell the bell-boy that life in America was much like life everywhere—humdrum and matter-of-fact, with no Indians and few adventures; but I soon desisted. Why should I spoil his dream?

And then, from up the street, came the rattle and blare of martial music, and we had our first view of an Irish performer on the bass-drum. It is a remark-

able and exhilarating spectacle. The drummer grasps a stick in each hand, and sometimes he pounds with both of them, and sometimes he twirls one over his head and pounds with the other, and sometimes he crosses his arms over the top of the drum and pounds that way. I suppose there is an etiquette about it, for they all conduct themselves in the same frenzied fashion, while the crowd stares fascinated. It is exhausting work, and I am told that during a long parade the drummers sometimes have to be changed two or three times. But there is never any lack of candidates.

There were thousands of men in line, that day, members of a hundred different lodges, each with its banner. Their women-folk trooped along with them, often arm-in-arm; and they trudged silently on with the slow and dogged tread of the beast of burden; and the faces of men and women alike were the pale, patient faces of those who look often in the eyes of want. It melted the heart to see them—to see their rough and toil-worn clothing, their gnarled and twisted hands, their heavy hob-nailed shoes—and to think of their treadmill lives, without hope and without beauty—just an endless struggle to keep the soul in the body. Minute after minute, for almost an hour, they filed past. What they hoped to gain, I do not know—a living wage, perhaps, since that is what labour needs most in Ireland—and what it has not yet won!

Our Buttons had watched the parade with the amused tolerance of the uniformed aristocrat.

"There's a lot of mad people in Dublin," he remarked cheerfully, as we turned to go in.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF ANCIENT ERIN

DUBLIN is by far the most fascinating town in Ireland. She has charm—that supreme attribute alike of women and of cities; and she has beauty, which is a lesser thing. She is rich in the possession of many treasures, and proud of the memorials of many famous sons. Despite all the vicissitudes of fortune, she has remained the spiritual and artistic capital of Ireland, and she looks forward passionately to the day when the temporal crown will be restored to her. To be sure, there is a canker in her bosom, but she knows that it is there; and perhaps some day she will gather courage to cut it out.

Among her memorials and treasures, are four of absorbing interest—the grave of Swift, the tomb of Strongbow, the Cross of Cong and the Book of Kells. It was for the first of these, which is in St. Patrick's Cathedral, that we started Monday morning, and to get there we mounted for the first time to the seats of a jaunting-car.

I suppose I may as well pause here for a word about this peculiarly Irish institution. Why it should be peculiarly Irish is hard to understand, for it furnishes a rapid, easy, and—when one has learned the trick—comfortable means of locomotion. Every one, of course, is familiar with the appearance of a jaunting-car—or side-car, as it is more often called—with its

two seats back to back, facing outwards, and a foot-rest overhanging each wheel.

Opposite the next page is a series of post-card pictures showing its evolution from the primitive drag, which is the earliest form of vehicle all the world over, and which still survives in the hilly districts of Ireland, where wheels would be useless on the pathless mountain-sides. Then comes a rude cart with solid wheels and revolving axle working inside the shafts, still used in parts of far Connaught, and then the cart with spoke wheels working outside the shafts on a fixed axle—pretty much the form still used all the world over—just such a "low-backed car" as sweet Peggy used when she drove to market on that memorable day in spring. The next step was taken when some comfort-loving driver removed the side-boards, in order that he might sit with his legs hanging down; and one sees them sitting just so all over Ireland, with their women-folk crouched on the floor of the cart behind, their knees drawn up under their chins, and all muffled in heavy shawls. I do not remember that I ever saw a woman sitting on the edge of a cart with her legs hanging over—perhaps it isn't good form!

Thus far there is nothing essentially Irish about any of these vehicles; but presently it occurred to some inventive Jehu that he would be more comfortable if he had a rest for his feet, and presto! the side-car. It was merely a question of refinements, after that—the addition of backs and cushions to the seats, the enlargement of the wheels to make the car ride more easily, the attachment of long springs for the same purpose, and the placing of a little box between the seats for

the driver to sit on when his car is full. In a few of the larger places, the development has reached the final refinement of rubber tires, but usually these are considered a too-expensive luxury.

Now evolution is supposed to be controlled by the survival of the fittest, but this is only half-true of the side-car; for, while admirably adapted to hilly roads, it is the worst possible conveyance in wet weather. Hilly roads are fairly frequent in Ireland, but they are nowhere as compared to wet days, and the side-car is a standing proof of the Irishman's indifference to rain. Indeed, we grew indifferent to it ourselves, before we had been in Ireland very long, for it really didn't seem to matter.

I suppose it is the climate, so soft, so sweet, so balmy that one gets no harm from a wetting. The Irish tramp around without any thought of the weather, work just the same in the rain as in the sun, never think of using a rain-coat or an umbrella—would doubtless consider the purchase of either a waste of money which could be far better spent—and yet, all the time we were in Ireland, we never saw a man or woman with a cold! The Irish are proud of their climate, and they have a right to be. And, now I think of it, perhaps the climate explains the jaunting-car.

That compound, by the way, is never used by an Irishman. He says simply "car." "Car" in Ireland means a side-car, and nothing else. In most other countries, "car" is short for motor-car. In Ireland, if one means motor, one must say motor. But the visitor will never have occasion to mean motor unless he owns one, for, outside of the trams in a few of the

THE EVOLUTION OF THE JAUNTING CAR

larger cities, the side-car is practically the only form of street and neighbourhood conveyance. One soon grows to like it; we have ridden fifty miles on one in a single day, and many times we rode twenty-five or thirty miles, without any undue sense of fatigue. The secret is to pick out a car with a comfortably-padded back extending in a curve around the rear end of each seat. One can tuck oneself into this curve and swing happily along mile after mile.

The driver of a side-car is called a jarvey. I don't know why. The Oxford dictionary says the word is a "by-form of the surname Jarvis," but I am not learned enough to see the connection, unless it was Mr. Jarvis who drove the first side-car. I wish I could say that the jarvey differed as much from the cabbies and chauffeurs of other lands as his car does from the cab and the taxi; but, alas, this is not the case. He is just as rapacious and piratical as they, though he may rob you with a smile, while they do it with a frown; and he has this advantage: there is no taximeter with which to control him. Everywhere, if one is not a millionaire, one must be careful to bargain in advance. Once the bargain is concluded, your jarvey is the most agreeable and obliging of fellows. He usually has every reason to be, for nine times out of ten he gets much the better of the bargain! I have never been able to decide whether, in these modern times when piracy on the high seas has been repressed, men with piratical instincts turn naturally to cab-driving, or whether all men have latent piratical instincts which cab-driving inevitably develops.

The Dublin jarvey is famous for his ability to turn

a corner at top-speed. He usually does it on one wheel, and the person on the outside seat has the feeling that, unless he holds tight, he will certainly be hurled into misty space. We held on, that morning, and so reached St. Patrick's without misadventure in a surprisingly few minutes.

St. Patrick's Cathedral is not an especially impressive edifice. It dates from Norman days, and was built over one of St. Patrick's holy wells; but, like most Irish churches, it was in ruins most of the time, and fifty years ago it was practically rebuilt in its present shape. Sir Benjamin Guinness, of the Guinness Brewery, furnished the money. Like all the other old religious establishments, it was taken from the Catholics in the time of Henry VIII and given to his Established Church—the Episcopal Church, here called the Church of Ireland—and has remained in its possession ever since, though the church itself was disestablished some forty years ago.

By far the most interesting fact about St. Patrick's is that Jonathan Swift was for thirty-two years its Dean, and now lies buried there beside that "Stella" whom he made immortal. A brass in the pavement marks the spot where they lie side by side, and on the wall not far away is the marble slab which enshrines the epitaph he himself wrote. It is in Latin, and may be Englished thus:

> Jonathan Swift, for thirty years Dean of this Cathedral, lies here, where savage indignation can no longer tear his heart. Go, traveller, and, if you can, imitate him who played a man's part as the champion of liberty.

Another slab bears a second epitaph written by Swift to mark the grave of "Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of 'Stella,' under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of this Cathedral." Whether she should have borne the name of him who celebrated her the world will never know. She died seventeen years before him, "killed by his unkindness," and was buried here at midnight, while he shut himself into a back room of his deanery across the way that he might not see the lights of the funeral party. He had faults and frailties enough, heaven knows, but the Irish remember them with charity, for, though his savage indignation had other fuel than Ireland's wrongs and sorrows, yet they too made his heart burn, and he voiced that feeling in words more burning still. He died in a madhouse, as he expected to die, leaving

> "the little wealth he had
> To build a house for fools and mad,
> And showed by one satiric touch
> No nation wanted it so much."

There is another characteristic epitaph of Swift's on a tablet in the south wall, near the spot where General Schomberg lies—that bluff old soldier who met glorious death at the head of his victorious troops at the battle of the Boyne. Swift wished to mark the grave with an appropriate memorial, but Schomberg's relatives declined to contribute anything toward its cost; whereupon Swift and his Chapter put up this slab, paying tribute to the hero's virtues, and adding that his valour

was more revered by strangers than by his own kindred.

There are many other curious and interesting monuments in the place, well worth inspecting, but I shall refer to only one of them—the one which started the feud that sent Strafford to the scaffold. It is a towering structure, erected by the great Earl of Cork to the memory of his "virtuous and religious" Countess, in 1629. It stood originally at the east end of the choir near the altar, but Strafford, instigated by Archbishop Laud, who protested that it was a monstrosity which desecrated that sacred place, compelled its removal to the nave, where it now stands. The Earl of Cork never forgave him, and hounded him to his death. The monument is a marvel of its kind, containing no less than sixteen highly-coloured figures, most of them life-size. The Earl and his lady lie side by side in the central panel, with two sons kneeling at their head and two at their feet, while their six daughters kneel in the panel below, three on either side of an unidentified infant. After contemplating this huge atrocity, one cannot but conclude that the Archbishop was right.

Back of the Cathedral is a little open square, where the children of the neighbouring slums come to play in the sunshine on the gravelled walks; and dirty and ragged and distressful as they are, they have still about them childhood's clouds of glory. So that it wrings the heart to look at the bedraggled, gin-soaked, sad-eyed, hopeless men and women who crowd the benches and to realise not only that they were children once, but that most of these children will grow to just such miserable maturity.

We walked from the Cathedral up to the Castle,

that morning, crossing this square and traversing a corner of the slums, appalling in their dirt and squalor, where whole families live crowded in a single room. In Dublin there are more than twenty thousand such families. Think what that means: five, six, seven, often even eight or nine persons, living within the same four walls—some in dark basements, some in ricketty attics—cooking and eating there, when they have anything to cook and eat; sitting there through the long hours; sleeping there through the foul nights; awaking there each morning to another hopeless day of misery. Think how impossible it is to be clean or decent amid such surroundings. Small wonder self-respect soon withers, and that drink, the only path of escape from these horrors, even for a little while, is eagerly welcomed. And the fact that every great city has somewhere within her boundaries some such foulness as this is perhaps the one thing our civilisation has most reason to be ashamed of!

Dublin Castle is interesting only because of its history. It was here, by what was then the ford across the Liffey just above the tideway, that the Danish invaders built their first stronghold in 837, and from it the last of them was expelled in 1170 by Strongbow at the head of his Anglo-Norman knights; here, two years later, Henry II received the submission of the overawed Irish chiefs; and from that day forward, this old grey fortress cast its shadow over the whole land. No tribesman was too remote to dread it, for the chance of any day might send him to rot in its dungeon, or shriek his life out in its torture-chamber, or set his

head to blacken on its tower—even as the shaggy head of Shan the Proud blackened and withered there for all the world to see. In a word, it is from the Castle that an alien rule has been imposed on Ireland for more than a thousand years, until to-day to say "the Castle" is to say "the Government."

Of the mediæval castle, only one of the four towers remains, and the curtains which connected them have been replaced by rows of office-buildings, where the Barnacles who rule Ireland have their lairs. A haughty attendant—not too haughty, however, to accept a tip—will show you through the state apartments, which are not worth visiting; and another, more human one, will show you through the chapel. It is more interesting without than within, for over the north door, side by side in delightful democratic equality, are busts of Dean Swift and St. Peter, while over the east one Brian Boru occupies an exalted place between St. Patrick and the Virgin Mary, while on the corbels of the window-arches the heads of ninety sovereigns of Great Britain have been cut—I cannot say with what fidelity.

It is but a step from the Castle to Christ Church Cathedral, by far the most interesting building in Dublin. The Danes founded it in 1038; then came Strongbow, who built an English cathedral atop the rude Danish church, which is now the crypt, and his transepts and one bay of his choir still survive. There were various additions and rebuildings, after that, but in 1569 the bog on which the Cathedral is built moved under its weight, the entire south wall of the nave and the vaulted roof fell in, and the debris lay where

it fell until 1875, when Henry Roe, of Roe's Whiskey, furnished the money for a complete restoration.

It is a significant coincidence that St. Patrick's was restored from the profits of a brewery and Christ Church from the profits of a distillery, for it was by some such profits that they had to be restored, if they were to be restored at all, because brewing and distilling are the only industries which have flourished in Dublin since the Act of Union. All others have decayed or withered entirely away. Wherein is food for thought!

But this takes nothing from the fact that Christ Church is an interesting structure; and the most interesting thing in it is the tomb of Strongbow. Richard de Clare his name was, second Earl of Pembroke, and it was to him, so legend says, that Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, appealed for aid, in 1166, after he had been driven from his kingdom and compelled to restore to Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Breffni, Dervorgilla—otherwise Mrs. O'Rourke—with whom he had eloped. It wasn't the lady that Dermot wanted—it was revenge, and, most of all, his kingdom —we shall hear more of this story later on—and Strongbow readily agreed to assist. He needed little persuasion, for the Normans had been looking longingly across the Irish Sea for many years; and Dermot got more than he bargained for, for Strongbow brought his legions over from Wales, entered Dublin, and soon established English rule so firmly that it was never afterwards displaced.

When Strongbow died, he was buried here in the church that he had built, and a recumbent statue in

chain armour was placed above the tomb, with legs crossed above the knees to indicate three crusades. Crossed at the ankles would have meant one crusade, between knee and ankle, two. I don't know how the old sculptors indicated four crusades; perhaps they never had to face that problem. Some critics assert that this is not the old statue at all; but if we paid heed to the critics, there would be mighty little left to believe!

If you will lay your hand upon the head of the statue, you will find that the top is worn away into a hole. And that hole was worn by human fingers—thousands upon thousands of them—placed there just as yours are, as witness to the making of a deed or the signing of an agreement or the paying of a debt. Almost all of such old documents in Dublin were "Made at the Tomb of Strongbow." Thither people came for centuries to settle accounts, and the Irish are so conservative, so tenacious of tradition, that I dare say the tomb is sometimes the scene of such transactions, even yet. Beside the knight's statue lies a truncated effigy supposed to represent his son, whom, in a fit of rage, he cut in two with a single stroke of his sword for cowardice on the battle-field.

There are many other things of interest about the church, especially about the crypt, where one may see the old city stocks, and the tabernacle and candlesticks used at the Mass celebrated here for James II while he was trying to conquer Ulster; and the church is fortunate in possessing a most intelligent verger, with whom it is a pleasure to explore it. We talked with him quite a while that day, and he lamented bitterly

that so few visitors to Dublin think the church worth seeing. I heartily endorse his opinion of them!

Which brings us to those two wonderful masterpieces of ancient Irish art, the Cross of Cong and the Book of Kells.

The Cross of Cong is in the National Museum of Science and Art, and is only the most interesting of many interesting things which have been assembled there. The first exhibit as one passes through the vestibule, has a flavour peculiarly Irish. It is an elaborate state carriage, lavishly decorated with carvings and inlay and bronze figures, and it was ordered by some Irish lord, who, when it was completed, found that he had no money to pay for it, and so left it on the builder's hands. What the poor builder did can only be conjectured. Perhaps he took down his shillelagh and went out and assaulted the lord; perhaps he fled to the hills and became a brigand; perhaps he just sat philosophically down and let *his* creditors do the worrying.

Just beyond the vestibule is a great court, containing a remarkable collection of plaster replicas of ancient Celtic crosses. They should be examined closely, especially the two which reproduce the high and low crosses at Monasterboice. We shall see the real crosses, before we leave Ireland, but they have iron railings around them, which prevent close examination, and they are not provided with explanatory keys as the replicas are. Half an hour's study of the replicas helps immensely toward appreciation of the originals.

The chief glory of the museum is its collection of

Irish antiquities on the upper floor. It starts with the Stone Age, and we could not but remark how closely the flint arrow-heads and spear-heads and other implements resemble those of the Indians and Mound-builders, so common in our part of Ohio. Then comes the Bronze Age, with a magnificent collection of ornaments of hammered gold, and some extraordinarily interesting examples of cinerary urns and food vessels —for the old Irish burned their dead, and, after the fashion of most Pagan peoples, put food in the grave beside them, to start them on their journey in the other world.

In the room beyond are the so-called Christian antiquities: that is, all the objects of art, as well as of domestic and military usage, which date from the time of St. Patrick down to the Norman conquest—roughly, from 400 A. D. to 1200 A. D. Before that time, Ireland was Pagan; after the Norman conquest, she was crushed and broken. It was during these eight hundred years, while the rest of Europe was struggling in ignorance and misery through the Dark Ages, that Ireland touched the summit of her artistic and spiritual development—and a lofty summit it was!

Her art was of home growth, uninfluenced from any outside source, and it was admirable. Her schools and monasteries were so famous that students from all over Europe flocked to them, as the recognised centres of learning. Scholars were revered and books were holy things—so holy that beautiful shrines were made to hold them, of gold or silver, set with precious stones. Five or six of them, nine hundred years old and more, are preserved in this collection.

The bells used by the early Irish saints in the celebration of the Mass were also highly venerated, and, cracked and worn by centuries of use, were at last enclosed in shrines. Most holy of all, of course, was the rude little iron bell used by St. Patrick, and recovered from his grave in 552. The exquisite shrine made for it by some master artist about 1100 is here, as is also the bell itself. There is a picture of the shrine opposite the next page; the bell is merely a rude funnel made of two bent iron plates rivetted together and then dipped in molten bronze—not much to look at, but an evoker of visions fifteen centuries old for them who have eyes to see!

I should like to say something of the croziers, of the brooches, of the chalices which are gathered here; but I must hasten on to the chief treasure, the Cross of Cong. It is perhaps the very finest example of early Irish art in existence anywhere. It was made to enshrine a fragment of the True Cross, sent from Rome in 1123 to Turlough O'Conor, King of Ireland, and it is called the "Cross of Cong" because Rory O'Conor, the last titular King of all Ireland, took it with him to the Abbey of Cong, at the head of Lough Corrib, when he sought sanctuary there in his last years, and it was by the Abbots of Cong that it was preserved religiously through the long centuries. The last Abbot died about a hundred years ago, and the museum acquired the cross by purchase.

There is a picture of it opposite the next page, which gives some faint idea of its beauty. It was in a cavity behind the central crystal that the fragment of the True Cross was placed; but it is not there now, and nobody

seems to know what became of it. Perhaps it doesn't matter much; at any rate, all that need concern us here is the fact that, eight hundred years ago in Ireland, there lived an artist capable of producing a masterpiece like this.

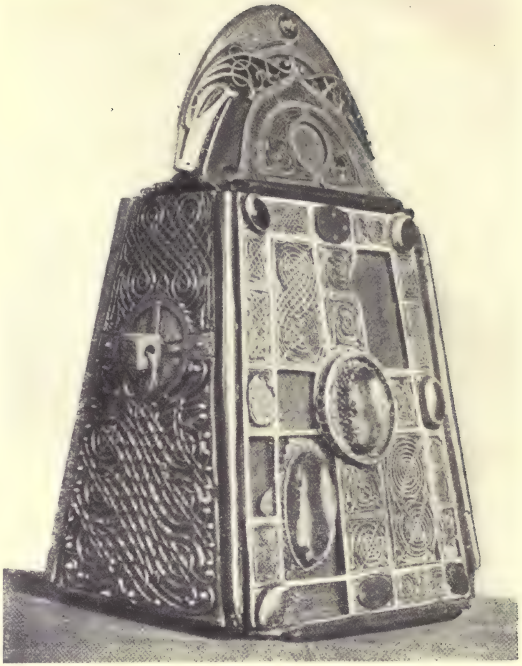
It is of oak, covered with plates of bronze and silver, washed in places with a thick coating of gold, and with golden filigree work of the most exquisite kind around the central crystal. It is elaborately carved, front and back, with the intertwined pattern characteristic of Irish ornamentation, and every detail is of the finest workmanship. It is inscribed with a Latin verse,

Hac cruce crux tegitur qua passus conditor orbis,

"In this cross is the cross enclosed upon which suffered the Founder of the world"; and there is also a long inscription in Irish which bids us pray, among others, for Turlough O'Conor, King of Erin, for whom the shrine was made, and for Maelisu MacBraddan O'Echon, the man who fashioned it. Thus is preserved the name of a great artist, who has been dust for eight centuries.

The Book of Kells is even more wonderful. It is to the library of Trinity College we must go to see it—and go we must!—for it is indisputably the "first among all the illuminated manuscripts of the world." No mere description can give any idea of its beauty, nor can any picture, for each of its pages is a separate masterpiece. Kells was a monastery celebrated for its sanctity and learning, and it was there, sometime in the eighth century, that an inspired monk executed this Latin copy of the Gospels. It is of sheepskin

THE CROSS OF CONG



THE SHRINE OF ST. PATRICK'S BELL

parchment, and each of its pages is framed with exquisite tracery and ornamentation, and with a beautiful harmony of colouring. Most wonderful of all, perhaps, the colours are as fresh and brilliant as they were when they came from the artist's brush, eleven centuries ago.

There are many other things in this old library worth seeing—among them the Book of Darrow, thirteen centuries old, and ornamented with designs which, as Betty remarked, would make beautiful crochet patterns. And there is Brian Boru's harp—the very one, perhaps, that shed the soul of music through Tara's halls—only unfortunately, the critics say that it isn't more than five or six hundred years old. And there are stacks of modern books, and the attendant who piloted us around remarked sadly that many of the best of them were never taken off the shelves, except to be dusted. I couldn't help smiling, for that is a complaint common to all librarians!

We went out, that night, to a big bazar given for the benefit of the Passionist Fathers, where we were made almost riotously welcome. "America" is the open sesame to every Irish heart; and how winning those bright-eyed Irish girls were in their quaint costumes! Ordinarily Irish girls are shy with strangers; but they were working in a good cause that night, and if any man got out of the place with a penny in his pocket it must certainly have been because he lacked a heart! And the nice old women, with smiling eyes and wrinkled, pleasant faces—we could have stayed and talked to them till morning! Indeed, we almost did!

CHAPTER IV

ON THE TRAIL OF THE SHAMROCK

Our third day in Dublin was ushered in by a tremendous explosion. In a minute the street outside was filled with dense black smoke, and then in another minute with excited people. When we got down to breakfast, we found that the suffragettes had tried to blow up the post-office, which is next to the hotel, by throwing a bomb through the door. But the woman who threw the bomb, like most women, couldn't throw straight, and instead of going through the door, the bomb struck a stone at the side of it and exploded. Our bell-boy proudly showed us the hole that it had made in the wall.

The day was so bright and pleasant that we decided to spend it somewhere in the country, and as we wanted to see a round tower, and as there is a very handsome one at Clondalkin, a few miles west of Dublin, we decided to go there. The ride thither gave us our first glimpse of rural Ireland—rather unkempt, with the fields very lush and green; and then, when we got off the train, we were struck by a fact which we had occasion to remark many times thereafter: that railroads in Ireland are built with an entire disregard of the towns along the route. Perhaps it is because the towns are only Irish that the railroads are so haughty and disdainful—for of course the roads are English; at any rate, they never swerve an inch to get

closer to any town. The train condescends to pause an instant at the point nearest the town, and then puffs arrogantly on again, while the passengers who have been hustled off hoof it the rest of the way.

We got off, that morning, at a little station with "Clondalkin" on it, but when we looked about, there was no town anywhere in sight. We asked the man who took the tickets if this was all there was of the town, and he said no, that the town was over yonder, and he pointed vaguely to the south. There was no conveyance, so we started to walk; and instead of condemning Irish railroads, we were soon praising their high wisdom, for if there is anything more delightful than to walk along an Irish lane, between hedgerows fragrant with hawthorn and climbing roses, past fields embroidered with buttercups and primroses and daisies, in an air so fresh and sweet that the lungs can't get enough of it, I don't know what it is. And presently as we went on, breathing great breaths of all this beauty, we caught sight of the conical top of the round tower, above the trees to the left.

I should say that Clondalkin is at least a mile from its station, and we found it a rambling village of small houses, built of stone, white-washed and with roofs of thatch. Many of them, even along the principal street, are in ruins, for Clondalkin, like so many other Irish villages, has been slowly drying up for half a century. There was a great abbey here once, but nothing is left of it except the round tower and a fragment of the belfry.

The tower stands at the edge of what is now the main street, and is a splendid example of another pe-

culiarly Irish institution. For these tall towers of stone, resembling nothing so much as gigantic chimneys, were built all over eastern and central Ireland, nobody knows just when and nobody knows just why; but there nearly seventy of them stand to this day.

They are always of stone, and are sometimes more than a hundred feet high. Some of them taper toward the top in a way which shows the high skill of their builders. That they were well-built their survival through the centuries attests. The narrow entrance door is usually ten or twelve feet from the ground, and there is a tiny window lighting each floor into which the tower was divided. At the top there are usually four windows, one facing each point of the compass; and then the tower is finished with a conical cap of closely-fitted stones.

As to their purpose, there has been violent controversy. Different antiquarians have believed them to be fire-temples of the Druids, phallic emblems, astronomical observatories, anchorite towers or penitential prisons. But the weight of opinion seems to be that they were built in connection with churches and monasteries to serve the triple purpose of belfries and watch-towers and places of refuge, and that they date from the ninth and tenth centuries, when the Danes were pillaging the country. In case of need, the monks could snatch up the most precious of their treasures, run for the tower, clamber up a ladder to the little door high above the ground, pull the ladder up after them, bar the door and be comparatively safe.

I confess I do not find this theory convincing. As belfries the towers must have been failures, for the

small bells of those days, hung a hundred feet above the ground in a chamber with only four tiny openings, would be all but inaudible. As watch-towers they were ineffective, for the enemy had only to advance at night to elude the lookout altogether; and as places of refuge, they leave much to be desired. For there is no way to get food or water into them, and the enemy had only to camp down about them for a few days to starve the inmates out. However, I am not an antiquarian, and my opinion is of no especial value—besides, I have no better theory to suggest. Whatever their purpose, there they stand, and very astonishing they are.

The Clondalkin tower, for the first thirteen feet, is a block of solid masonry about twenty feet in diameter, and above this is the little door opening into the first story. New floors have been built at the different levels and ladders placed between them, so that one may climb the eighty-five feet to the top, but we were contented to take the view for granted. While I manœuvred for a photograph in a field of buttercups which left my shoes covered with yellow pollen, Betty got into talk with the people who lived in the cottage at the tower-foot, and then she crossed the street to look over a wall at a tiny garden that was a perfect riot of bloom, and by the time I got there, the fresh-faced old woman with a crown of white hair who owned the garden had come out, and, after a few minutes' talk, started to pick Betty a bouquet of her choicest flowers.

Betty was in a panic, for she didn't want the garden despoiled,—at the same time she realised that she must

be careful or she would hurt the feelings of this kindly woman, who was so evidently enjoying pulling her flowers to give to the stranger from America. It was at that moment the brilliant idea flashed into her head to ask if the true shamrock grew in the neighbourhood.

"Sure, miss, I have it right here," was the answer, and the owner of the garden picked up proudly a small pot in which grew a plant that looked to me like clover.

"But doesn't it grow wild?" Betty asked.

"It does, miss; but 'tis very hard to find. This was sent me by my brother in Tipperary. 'Tis the true shamrock, miss," and she broke off a spray for each of us.

Let me say here that she knew perfectly well Betty was a married woman; her first question had been as to our relationship. But all over Ireland, women, whether married or single, are habitually addressed as "miss," just as, conversely, in France they are addressed habitually as "madame." But we had got the old woman's mind off her flowers, and we managed to escape before she thought of them again.

There are not, I fancy, many visitors to Clondalkin, for, as we sauntered on along the street, we found ourselves objects of the liveliest interest. It was a kindly interest, too, for every one who could catch our eyes smiled and nodded and wished us good-day, just as the Dutch used to do in the little towns of Holland. We were heading for the church, and when we reached it we found that there was a large school attached to it, and most of the pupils were having their lessons outdoors, a group in this corner and a group in that. The small children were being taught by older ones,

and the older children were being taught by nuns; but I am afraid that our passage through the school-yard nearly broke up the lessons. It was a sort of triumphal progress, for, as we passed each class, the teacher in charge would say "Stand!" and all the children would rise to their feet and stare at us with round eyes, and the teacher would bow gravely. I am sorry now I didn't stop and talk to some of them, but the formal nature of our reception confused and embarrassed us, and we hastened on.

We took a look at the church, which is new and bare; and then we walked on toward the gate, past a lawn which two gardeners were leisurely mowing. It was evident from the way they returned our greeting that they wanted to talk, so we stopped and asked if we could get a car in the village to take us back to the station.

"You can, miss," said the elder of the two men, who did all the talking, while his younger companion stood by and grinned. "There is a very good car to be had in the village," and he told us where to go to find the owner. "You would be from America? I have a sister and two brothers there." And he went on to tell us about them, where they lived and what they were doing and how they had prospered. And then Betty asked him if he could find her a piece of the true shamrock. "I can, miss," he answered instantly, and stepping over a low wire fence, he waded out into a meadow and came back in a moment with a clover-like clump in his hand. "This is it, miss," he said, and gave it to her; "the true shamrock."

We examined it eagerly. It was a trefoil, the leaf

of which is like our white clover, except that it lacks the little white rings which mark the leaf of ours, and it blossoms with a tiny yellow flower. I confess that it wasn't at all my idea of the shamrock, nor was it Betty's, and she asked the gardener doubtfully if he was sure that this was it.

"I am, miss," he answered promptly; "as sure as I am of anything."

"But down in the village," said Betty, "a woman gave me this," and she took the spray from her buttonhole, "and said *it* was the true shamrock. You see the leaf is quite green and larger and the blossom is white."

"True for you, miss; and there be some people who think that the true shamrock. But it is not so—'tis only white clover. The true shamrock is that I have given you."

"Well, you are a gardener," said Betty, "and ought to know."

"Ah, miss," retorted the man, his eyes twinkling, "you could start the prettiest shindy you ever saw by getting all the gardeners in Ireland together, and asking them to decide which was the true shamrock!"

I suppose I may as well thresh out the question here, so far as it is possible to thresh it out at all, for though, in the east, the west, the north and south of Ireland, we sought the true shamrock, we were no more certain of it when we got through than before we began. The only conclusion we could reach, after listening to every one, was that there are three or four varieties of the shamrock, and that almost any trefoil will do.

The legend is that, about 450, St. Patrick reached

the Rock of Cashel, in his missionary journeyings over Ireland, and at once went to work to convert Ængus MacNatfraich, the ruling king who lived in the great castle there. One day, out on the summit of the rock, as the Saint was preaching to the king and his assembled household, he started to explain the idea of the Trinity, and found, as many have done since, that it was rather difficult to do. Casting about for an illustration, his eyes fell upon a trefoil growing at his feet, and he stooped and plucked it, and used its three petals growing from one stem as a symbol of the Three-in-One. This simple and homely illustration made the idea intelligible, and whenever after that St. Patrick found himself on the subject of the Trinity, he always stooped and plucked a trefoil to demonstrate what he meant.

Now of course the true shamrock is the particular trefoil which St. Patrick plucked first on the Rock of Cashel, but there is no way of telling which that was. In his subsequent preaching, the Saint would pluck the first that came to hand, since any of them would answer his purpose, and so, sooner or later, all the Irish trefoils would be thus used by him. The Irish word "seamrog" means simply a trefoil, and in modern times, the name has been applied to watercress, to wood-sorrel, and to both yellow and white clover; but nowadays only the two last-named kinds are generally worn on St. Patrick's day. Whether white or yellow clover is worn is said to depend somewhat on the locality, but the weight of authority is, I think, slightly on the side of the yellow.

Whatever its colour, it is a most elusive plant and

difficult to get. Our original idea was that every Irish field was thick with shamrocks, but in no instance except that of the gardener at Clondalkin, do I remember any one finding some growing wild right at hand. Indeed, in most localities, it didn't seem to grow wild at all, but was carefully raised in a pot, like a flower. Where it *did* grow wild, it was always in some distant and inaccessible place. I should have suspected that this was simply blarney, and that our informants either wished to keep our profane hands off the shamrock or expected to get paid for going and getting us some, but for the fact that those who raised it always eagerly offered us a spray, and those who didn't usually disclaimed any exact knowledge of where it grew.

We bade the Clondalkin gardener and his helper good-bye at last, and walked on down to the village for a look at the remnant of the fort the Danes built here as their extreme western outpost against the wild Irish, and presently we fell in with an old woman, bent with rheumatism, hobbling painfully along, and she told us all about her ailment, and then as we passed a handsome house set back in a garden surrounded by a high wall, she pointed it out proudly as the residence of the parish priest. Then we thought it was time to be seeing about our car, and started down the street to find its owner, when we heard some one running after us. It was a man of about thirty, and his face, though not very clean, was beaming with friendliness.

"Is it a car your honour would be wantin'?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. "How did you know?"

"The man up at the church told me, sir. He said you'd be wishin' to drive to the station."

"Well, we do," I said. "It's too far to walk. Have you a car?"

"I have, sir, and it's myself would be glad to carry you and your lady there."

"All right," I agreed; and then, as an afterthought, "How much will you charge?"

"Not a penny, sir," he protested warmly. "Not a penny."

I stared at him. I confess I didn't understand. He returned my stare with a broad smile.

"The Dublin train doesn't go for an hour yet, sir," he went on. "If you'll just be wanderin' down this way when the time comes, you'll find me ready."

"It's mighty kind of you," I said hesitatingly; "but we couldn't think of troubling you . . ."

"Niver a bit of trouble, sir," he broke in. "I'll be that proud to do it."

He seemed so sincerely in earnest that we finally agreed, and he raced away as he had come, while we went on to the village post-office to mail a postcard—and perhaps find some one else to talk to.

The post-office was a little cubby-hole of a place, in charge of a white-haired, withered little old woman, whom we found very ready to talk indeed. At first there were the inevitable questions about America and about our family history, and then she told us about herself and her work and the many things she had to do. For every Irish post-office, no matter how small, is the centre of many activities. Not only does it handle the village mail, but it is also the village tele-

graph-office, and it does the work—by means of the parcel-post—which in this country has been done until quite recently by the express companies. Furthermore it is at the post-office that the old age pensions are disbursed and the multifarious details of the workman's insurance act attended to.

The latter is too complicated to be explained here, but we soon had a demonstration of the working of the old age pension, for, as we sat there talking, a wrinkled old woman with a shabby shawl over her head, came in, said something we did not understand, held out her hand, was given three or four pennies, and walked quickly out.

"The poor creatures," said the postmistress gently, "how can one be always refusin' them!" And then, seeing that we did not understand, she went on, "That one gets an old age pension, five shillings the week; but it never lasts the week out, and so she comes in for a bit of an advance. I shouldn't be giving it to her, for she's no better in the end, but I can't turn her away. Besides, she thinks—and there's many like her—that the pension may be stoppin' any time, next week maybe, and so what she gets this week is so much ahead. Many of them have no idea at all of where the money do be coming from."

I am not myself partial to pensions of any sort, for no permanent good can come from alms-giving, which weakens instead of strengthens; but Ireland, perhaps, needs special treatment. At any rate, the pensions have been a great help. Every person over seventy years of age and with an income of less than ten shillings a week, receives five shillings weekly from the

government. The same law applies to England and Scotland, but there is an impression that Ireland is getting more than her share. Certainly there is a surprisingly large number of people there whose income is under ten shillings and whose years exceed threescore and ten. I questioned the postmistress about this, and she smiled.

"Yes, there be a great many," she agreed. "In this small place alone there are fifty poor souls who get their five shillings every Friday. Are they all over seventy? Sure, I don't know; there be many of them don't know themselves; but they all think they are, only it was very hard sometimes to make the committee believe it. There is Mary Clancy, now, as spry a woman as you will see anywhere, and lookin' not a day over fifty. The committee was for refusin' her, but she said, said she, 'Your honours, I was the mother of fourteen children, and the youngest of them was Bridget, whom you see here beside me. Bridget was married when she was seventeen, and she has fifteen children of her own, and this is the youngest of them she has by the hand—you'll see that he is four years old. Now how old am I?' The gentlemen of the committee they looked at her and then they looked at each other and then they took out their pencils and made some figures and then they scratched their heads and then they said she should have a pension. And sure she deserved it!"

We agreed with her,—though, as I figured it out afterwards, Mrs. Clancy may still have been a year or two under seventy—and then she went on to explain that the pensions had been a blessing in another way,

for not only do they give the old people a bit to live on, but their children treat them better in consequence. In the old days, the parents were considered an encumbrance, and whenever a marriage contract was made or a division of the property, it was always carefully stipulated who should look after them. Naturally in a land where a man was hard put to it to provide for his own family, he was reluctant to assume this additional burden, and the result often was that the old people went to the workhouse—a place they shunned and detested and considered it a disgrace to enter. But the pension has changed all that, for a person with a steady income of five shillings a week is not to be lightly regarded in Ireland; and so the old people can live with their children now, and the workhouses are somewhat less crowded than they used to be.

But they are still full enough, heaven knows, in spite of the aversion and disgust with which the whole Irish people regard them. Let me explain briefly why this is so, because the establishment of the workhouse system is typical of the blind fashion in which England, in the past, has dealt with Irish problems,—the whole Irish problem, as some protest, is merely the result of a stupid people trying to govern a clever one!

About eighty years ago, England realised that something must be done for the Irish poor. Irish industries had been killed by unfriendly legislation, the land was being turned from tillage to grass, and so, since there was no work, there was nothing for the labouring class to do but emigrate or starve. In fact, a large section of the people had not even those alter-

natives, for there was no way in which they could get money enough to emigrate.

The Irish themselves suggested that something be done to develop the industrial resources of the country, so that the able-bodied could find work, and that some provision be made for the old, sick and infirm who were unable to work, and for children who were too young. Instead of that, and in spite of frenzied and universal Irish protest, a bill was put through Parliament extending the English workhouse system to Ireland.

Now, the workhouse system was devised to provide for tramps—for people who would not work, though work was plentiful; so there is a stigma about the workhouse which the Irish poor detest and which most of them do not deserve. They enter it only when driven by direst need—and how dire that need has been may be judged by the fact that, in 1905, for instance, the number of workhouse inmates exceeded forty-five thousand. Of these, about four thousand might be classified as tramps. The remainder were aged and infirm men and women, young children, and a sprinkling of starving middle-aged who could find no work—but the disgrace of the workhouse was upon them all.

To-day, the traveller in Ireland finds one of these mammoth structures in every town—in nearly every village, for their total number is 159. In fact, the two most imposing buildings in the average Irish town are the workhouse and the jail. And there is a savage irony in this, for not only are there few voluntary paupers in Ireland, but there is amazingly little crime.

Six millions a year of Irish money are spent to maintain the workhouses; how much the jails cost I don't know; but perhaps in that golden age which some optimists believe will follow the coming of Home Rule, workhouses and jails alike will be transformed into schools and factories, and Irish money will be spent in brightening and beautifying the lives of Ireland's people.

We bade good-bye, at last, to the little Clondalkin postmistress, with many mutual good wishes, and wandered forth to find the Samaritan who had offered to take us to the station; and finally we saw him standing in a gateway beckoning to us, and when we reached him, we found the gateway led to the house which had been pointed out to us as that of the parish priest. It was a beautiful house, with lovely grounds and gardens and a large conservatory against one end, and we stood hesitating in the gateway, wondering if we would better enter.

"Come in, sir; come in, miss!" cried our new-found friend. "The Father is away from home the day, worse luck, but he'd never forgive me if I didn't make you welcome."

"Oh, then you're the gardener," I said.

"Sure, I'm everything, sir," and he hustled us up the path, his face beaming with happiness. "And how grieved His Riverence will be when he comes back and learns that he missed you. If he was anywhere near, I'd have gone for him at once, but he went to Dublin to the conference and he won't be back till evenin'. He's a grand man, God bless him, and has travelled all over the world, and it's himself would

know how to talk to you! There is the cart, sir; but there's no hurry. I must cut some blooms for your lady."

Betty was already admiring the flowers—great scarlet peonies, white and pink geraniums, cinerarias, laburnums, and I know not what beside; but she tried to stop him as he made a dash at them, knife in hand.

"Oh, but you mustn't cut them!" she cried. "What would the Father say!"

"Sure, miss, if he was here, he'd make me cut twice as many!" he retorted, and went on cutting and cutting. "If he was here, 'tis not by this train you'd be leaving. He'd take you all over the house, and it would break his heart if you didn't stop for tea. It's sorry he'll be when he gets home and I tell him of you!"

We too were sorry, and said so—sorrier, next day, when we learned from Katherine Tynan Hinkson what an accomplished and interesting man he is. Meanwhile, the gardener had entered the greenhouse and was attacking the plants there. Almost by main force, and sorely against his will, we made him stop. As it was, Betty had about all she could carry—as lovely a bouquet, she protested, as she had ever had in her life. And the joy of this simple, kindly fellow in being able to give it to her was beautiful to see.

Then he brought out a fat little mare and hitched her to the cart, and insisted on driving us for a while along the fragrant country roads before he took us to the station. And I am sure that he valued our thanks much more than the coin I slipped into his hand.

We went out, that night, to see some friends in Dublin, and Betty took part of her bouquet along to give to them. And as we were walking up Grafton Street, an old and tattered woman, with two or three grimy little bouquets in her hands, fell in beside us and begged us to buy one. Finally she laid one of them on top of the gorgeous bunch Betty was carrying.

"Take it, miss; take it!" she urged. "Just see how beautiful it is!"

"It's not beautiful at all!" Betty protested. "It's faded."

"And so am I faded, miss," came the instant retort. "Sure, we can't all be fresh and lovely like yourself!"

Of course, after that, I bought the bouquet!

CHAPTER V

THE COUNTRY OF ST. KEVIN

DUBLIN is fortunate in its environs. A few miles to the south or west, and one is in the midst of lovely scenery. The Liffey, just above the town, changes from an unsightly stream into a beautiful river; just to the south lie the Wicklow hills—one can reach their foot by tram-line and some of their wildest beauties are within an hour's walk; a short run by rail takes one to Bray, from where the Dargle, a glen beloved of Dubliners, is within easy reach. But the wise traveller will keep on to Rathdrum, and from there drive over to Glendalough. Or the trip may be made all the way from Dublin by motor-omnibus, and by this route one gets the full beauty of the Wicklow passes; but I think the car trip preferable, at least in fine weather.

The forty-mile run from Dublin to Rathdrum is by the very edge of the sea. The roadway has been cut high in the face of the cliffs that fringe the coast—sometimes piercing a projecting headland, sometimes spanning a deep gully, sometimes skirting a sheer precipice—and the view at every turn is very romantic and beautiful. The train pauses at Bray, and then, still hugging the coast, reaches Wicklow, where it turns inland and mounts toward the hills along a pleasant valley to Rathdrum, perched in the most picturesque way on the steep banks of the Avonmore, for all the world like an Alpine village.

Betty and I were the only ones who descended at Rathdrum, that day, and we were glad, for it is peculiarly true of a side-car that two are company and any larger number a crowd. The car was waiting, and in a few minutes we were off on the twelve-mile drive.

The road mounted steeply for a time, passed through a dingy village clinging to a hillside, and then suddenly emerged high above the lovely Vale of Clara. Far down, so far it seemed the merest ribbon, the Avonmore sparkled over its rocky bed; beside it, here and there, a thatched cottage nestled among the trees; and the greenest of green fields ran back to the hills on either side. Here the gorse began, mounting the hillsides in a riot of golden bloom, only to be met and vanquished on the highest slopes by the low, closely-growing heather, brown with last year's withered flowers, but soon to veil the hilltops in a cloud of purple. But the gorse was in its glory—every hedge, every fence, every wall, every neglected corner was ablaze with it; it outlined every field; the road we travelled was a royal way, bordered on either side with gold. "Unprofitably gay?" Betty hotly disputed it. For how could such beauty be unprofitable?

It was a perfect day, with the air magically soft and the sun just warm enough for comfort, and we sat there, mightily content, drinking in mile after mile of loveliness. Away across the valley, we caught a glimpse of Avondale House, a school of forestry now, but sacred to every Irishman as the home of Parnell. A little farther on, Castle Howard glooms down upon the valley where the Avonmore meets the Avonbeg—that "Meeting of the Waters" celebrated by Tom

Moore. But it would take a far greater poet to do justice to that exquisitely beautiful Vale of Avoca, stretching away into the shimmering distance.

The road turned away, at last, from the edge of the valley and plunged into a beautiful wood, and we could see that the bracken was alive with rabbits. It was a game preserve, our driver said, and he told us to whom it belonged, but I have forgotten. I suggested that, when he had nothing better to do, it would be easy enough to come out and knock over a rabbit.

"They would be putting a lad away for six months for the likes of that," he protested.

"Surely no one would grudge you a rabbit now and then!"

"Ah, wouldn't they?" and he laughed grimly. "There's nothing the keepers like so much as to get their hands on one of us. Why, sir, 'tis a crime for a man to be caught on the far side of that wall. Not but what I haven't got me a rabbit before this," he added, "and will again."

We passed a gang of men repairing the road, and two or three others sitting along the roadside, breaking stone by hand, and wearing goggles to protect their eyes from the flying splinters; and our driver told us how the contract for keeping each section of road in shape was let each year by the county council to the lowest bidder, and the roads inspected at regular intervals to see that the work was properly done. Two shillings a day—fifty cents—was about the average wage. I suppose it is because stone is so plentiful and labour so cheap that the roads all over Ireland are so good; but one would be inclined to welcome a rut

now and then, if it meant a decent wage for the labourers!

We emerged from the wood presently, and then, away to the left, our jarvey pointed out the high peaks which guard the entrance to Glendalough—and let me say here that the word "lough," which occurs so frequently in Irish geography, means lake, and is pronounced almost exactly like the Scotch "loch." Glendalough is one of the most beautiful and romantic spots in Ireland, and its story runneth thus:

In the year 498, the King of Leinster had a son whom he named Caomh-ghen, or Gentle-born, and whom to-day we call Kevin. The King had been converted by St. Patrick himself, and he brought his boy up a Christian; and Kevin had never the slightest doubt as to his vocation, but knew from the very first that he must be a priest. So he was sent first to St. Petroc's school in Wicklow, and then to his uncle, St. Eugenius, who had a school near Glenealy.

Kevin grew in grace and wisdom, and likewise in beauty, until a handsomer lad was to be found nowhere in Erin, and many a girl looked sideways at him as he passed, but he paid no heed. One of them, seeing him so fair and saintly, lost her heart to him entirely, and her head as well, for she grew so shameless that she followed him in his walks, pleading with him, touching his hand, kissing his robe—all of which must have been most embarrassing to that modest and retiring man. At last, one day, she waylaid him in a wood, and, hungry with passion, flung herself upon him.

There are two versions of what followed. One is that St. Kevin escaped by jumping into a bush of

nettles, and cooled the damsel's ardour by beating her with a branch of them, whereupon she asked his pardon and made a vow of perpetual virginity. The other, and much more plausible one, is that, after the manner of women, she loved Kevin more desperately after he had beaten her than she had before, and that finally the Saint, worn out by a struggle in which he saw that he would some day be defeated, resolved to hide himself where no man could discover him, and betook himself to the wild and inaccessible spot where the mountains meet above Glendalough. There high in the side of the cliff above the lake, he found a crevice where he made his bed, and lay down with a sigh of relief for the first peaceful sleep he had had for a long time. Here is Tom Moore's rendering of the rest of the story:

On the bold cliff's bosom cast,
Tranquil now he sleeps at last;
Dreams of heaven, nor thinks that e'er
Woman's smile can haunt him there.
But nor earth nor heaven is free
From her power if fond she be;
Even now while calm he sleeps,
Kathleen o'er him leans and weeps.

Fearless she had tracked his feet
To this rocky, wild retreat,
And when morning met his view,
Her wild glances met it too.
Ah! your saints have cruel hearts!
Sternly from his bed he starts,
And, with rude, repulsive shock,
Hurls her from the beetling rock.

Glendalough, thy gloomy wave
Soon was gentle Kathleen's grave!
Soon the saint (but, ah! too late)
Felt her love and mourned her fate.
When he said, "Heaven rest her soul!"
Round the lake light music stole,
And her ghost was seen to glide
Smiling o'er the fatal tide.

Most biographers of the Saint hotly deny that he killed the fair Kathleen, and point out that he was far too holy a man to do such a thing, even in a moment of anger; but, on the other hand, Kathleen's ghost may be seen almost any night sitting on a rock by the lake-side, combing its yellow hair and lamenting its sad fate. What, then, are we to believe? My own theory is that when the Saint opened his eyes, that fatal morning, and found his tempter bending over him, he sprang hastily away, well knowing to what lengths her passion led her, and inadvertently brushed her off the narrow ledge of rock. The horrified Saint scrambled down the cliff as quickly as he could, but the too-impulsive girl was dead. A good many people will add that it served the hussy right.

This seems to me a reasonable theory; whether it be true or not, Saint Kevin dwelt seven years in his cave, after Kathleen's death, without being further disturbed. Then one day, a shepherd climbing down over the cliff searching for a lost sheep, came upon the holy man, sitting meditating in his cell, and hastened away to spread the news of the discovery of a new saint. Great throngs crowded the lake to get a glimpse of him, much to his annoyance, and besought him to

come down so that they could see him better. This he sternly refused to do, and told them to go away; but finally he permitted them to build him a little chapel on a shelf of rock near his cell. That was in June, 536; but the number of his disciples increased so rapidly that the chapel soon proved too small, and at last an angel appeared to him and ordered him to found a monastery at the lower end of the lake. This he did, and it soon became one of the most famous in Ireland.

It must have been a picturesque place; for there was a special stone-roofed cell for the Saint, and no less than seven churches to hold the people, and a great huddle of domestic buildings to protect the students from the rain and cold, and finally a tall round tower, from which to watch for the Norse invader. St. Kevin himself died in the odour of sanctity on the third day of June, 618. What I like about this story of St. Kevin are the dates—they give it such an unimpeachable vraisemblance!

After his death, the monastery had a varied history. It was destroyed by fire in 770, and sacked by the Danes in 830 and many times thereafter; but the final blow was struck by the English invaders in 1308, when the place was burnt to the ground. Since then it has been in ruins, much as it is to-day.

As we drove into the valley, that lovely day in May, no prospect could have been more beautiful. To right and left, in the distance, towered the bare brown hills, very steep and rugged, with the blue lake nestling between. In the foreground lay the ruins of the seven churches, with the round tower rising high above

them; and, from among the trees, peeped here and there the thatched roof of a cottage with a plume of purple smoke rising from its chimney. It was like a vision—like some ideal, painted scene, too lovely to be real—and we gazed at it in speechless enchantment while our jarvey drove us around the lower lake, under the shadow of the hills, and so to the little inn where we were to have lunch.

We were looking in delight at the inn, with its thatched roof and whitewashed walls, when a formidable figure appeared in the door—a towering young woman, with eyes terrifically keen and a thick shock of the reddest hair I ever saw. She was a singularly pure specimen, as I afterwards learned, of the red Irish—a sort of throw-back, I suppose, to the old Vikings of the Danish conquest. I admit that I quailed a little, for she was looking at us with an expression which seemed to me anything but friendly.

"Can we get lunch?" I inquired.

"You can," she answered, short and sharp like the snap of a whip, and she stood in the doorway staring at us, without making any sign that we should enter.

"Is it ready?" I ventured further, for the long drive had made us very hungry.

"It is not."

Let me say here that very rarely does any one of Irish blood say "yes" or "no" in answer to a question. When you ask the man at the station, "Is this the train for So-and-so?" he will invariably answer, "It is," or "It is not," as the case may be. When you ask your jarvey if he thinks it will rain to-day, his invariable answer is "It will not." I never heard an Irishman

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GLENDALOUGH AND THE RUINS OF ST. KEVIN'S CHURCHES

admit unreservedly that it was going to rain. But before I had time to ask the red-headed girl any further questions, she was hustled aside by a typical little brown Irishwoman, who asked us in and made us welcome. Lunch would be ready in fifteen minutes, she said; meanwhile, if we wished, we could walk to the waterfall.

Of course we *did* wish, and set eagerly forth past the end of the upper lake, across a bridge, past a great empty hotel which was falling to decay, and up a little stream to the fall. It is really a series of rapids rather than a fall, and only mildly pretty; but growing abundantly in the damp ground along the margin of the stream was what Betty declared to be the true shamrock—a very beautiful trefoil, evidently a variety of oxalis, and certainly much nearer our ideal of the shamrock than the skimpy plant shown us by the gardener at Clondalkin. We gathered some of it, and then hastened back—for we didn't want to be late for lunch. As we were passing the lake, we noticed an extremely dirty and unkempt individual, who looked like a vagabond, sitting on a stone, and as soon as he saw us, he jumped up and fell in beside us.

"Your honour will be goin' to St. Kevin's bed," he began.

"Where is the bed?" I asked.

"In the cliff beyant there, sir," and he pointed across the lake.

"How do we get to it?"

"Sure I'll carry your honour and your lady in me boat."

I looked at the fellow, and at the wide lake, and at

the little flat-bottomed skiff moored to a rock near by, and I had my doubts as to the wisdom of entrusting ourselves to the combination. He read the doubt in my face, and broke in with voluble protests.

"Arrah, you must go to the bed, your honour," he cried; "and your honour's lady, too. 'Tis the place where the blessed Saint lived for siven years, and if you sit down in his seat you will niver have the back-ache, and if you lie down in his bed you will niver have any ache at all, at all, and if you make three wishes they will surely come true."

Betty and I glanced at each other. We were tempted. Then I looked at our would-be guide.

"Why don't you make three wishes yourself?" I asked.

"I have, your honour."

"Did they come true?"

"They did, your honour," he answered instantly. "I asked for a light heart, a quick wit and a ready tongue. Your honour can see that I have all of them."

My heart began to warm to him, for he was the first person we had met in Ireland who talked like this.

"Now just be lookin' at this, your honour," he went on, and led us to the side of the road where stood a cross of stone—the terminal cross, as I afterwards learned, which marked the boundary of the old monastery. "Do you see them marks? This large one is the mark of a horse's hoof, and this small one of a colt's; and 'twas by a miracle they came there. In the old time, there was a man who stole a mare and her foal, but who denied it, and who was brought before

St. Kevin. The Saint placed the man in front of this cross and told him if he was guilty to be sayin' it, and if he was not guilty to be sayin' it; and the man said he was not guilty. And as he spoke the words, the shape of the hoofs appeared on the cross, and when the man saw them, he knew it was no use tryin' to deceive the Saint, so he confessed everything. And there the hoof-prints are to this day."

They certainly bore some resemblance to hoof-prints, and I could not but admire the ingenuity of the tale which had been invented to explain them.

"What happened to the thief?" I asked. "Did the Saint let him go?"

"He did not, your honour, for it was the law that he must be hanged. But before he died, he asked the Saint to grant him one favour, and the Saint told him to name it; and the man asked that he be buried in the same graveyard with the Saint himself, and that on his grave a stone be placed with a hole in the middle, so that, if a horse stepped over his grave, he might put out his hand and pull it in. The Saint kept his promise, and in the graveyard yonder you may see the stone."

As, indeed, we did; at least, there is a grave there covered by a stone with a large round hole in the middle.

"And now, your honour," went on our guide, as we came to the door of the inn, "you will be wantin' me to row you over to the Saint's bed, I'm thinkin'."

"What is the fare?" I asked.

"As much over sixpence as you care to give, your honour."

"All right," I said. "We'll be ready presently." And we went in to lunch.

We certainly enjoyed that meal, though I have forgotten its ingredients; but I have not forgotten the clean, pleasant dining-room in which it was served. And then we sallied forth for the visit to St. Kevin's bed.

Our guide was awaiting us, and helped us into his boat and pushed off; and at once began to recount the legends of the lake; how the fairies danced punctually at nine every evening, whenever there was a moon, while at eleven the ghost of the fair Kathleen sat on a stone and sang and combed her hair, and at twelve the wraith of a wicked sorceress struck blind by St. Kevin glided about the lake. I forget what else happened, but it was evident that any one spending a night there would not lack for entertainment. And he told us why no skylark ever sings in the vale of Glendalough.

It seems that when St. Kevin was building his monastery, he had a great number of workmen employed, and the rule was that they should begin the day's labour with the singing of the lark and end it when the lambs lay down to rest. It was summer time, and the larks began to sing about three in the morning, while the lambs refused to retire until nine at night. The workmen thought these hours excessive, and so complained to St. Kevin, and he listened to them, and looked at them, and when he saw their poor jaded faces and tired eyes wanting sleep, his kind heart pitied them, and he promised to see what he could do. So he raised his eyes to heaven and put up a prayer that the lark might never sing in the valley, and that the lamb

might lie down before the sun was set; and the prayer was granted, and from that day to this Glendalough has been famous as

> "the lake whose gloomy shore
> Skylark never warbles o'er."

At what hour the lambs now go to rest our boatman did not state, and I did not have time to make any observations for myself; but I commend the question to the attention of antiquarians.

By the time all these tales had been told, we were across the lake and drawing in toward a high cliff on the other side; and suddenly somebody shouted at us, and, as the hills shuttlecocked the echo back and forth across the water, we looked up and saw two men clinging to the cliff about forty feet up. As our boat ran in to the shore, they came scrambling down and helped us out upon a narrow strand.

"The seat and the bed are up yonder," said our guide. "Them ones will help your honour up."

I looked at the perpendicular cliff, quite smooth except for a little indentation here and there where one might possibly put one's toe, and my desire to sit in St. Kevin's seat suffered a severe diminution, for I have no head for heights. I said as much and listened sceptically to the fervent assurances of the guides that there was no danger at all, at all, that they had piloted thousands of people up and down the cliff without a single mishap, glory be to God. I knew they were talking for a tip, and not from any abstract love of truth. But in matters of this sort, Betty is much more impulsive than I—as will appear more than once in

the course of this narrative—and she promptly declared that she was going up, for the chance to be granted three wishes was too good to be missed. So up she went, one man pulling in front and the other guiding her toes into those little crevices in the rock; and presently she passed from sight, and then her voice floated down to me saying that she was all right.

Of course I had to follow, if I was to escape a lifetime of derision, and after a desperate scramble, I found her sitting on a narrow ledge at the back of a shallow cave in the cliff, with her eyes closed, making her three wishes. Then I sat down and made mine; and then the guides offered to conduct us to St. Kevin's bed, but when I found that the bed was a hole in the cliff into which one had to be poked feet first, and that to get to it one had to walk along a ledge about three inches wide, I interposed a veto so vigorous that it prevailed.

Having got up, it was necessary to get down, and when I looked at the cliff, I understood why St. Kevin had stayed there seven years. The method of descent is simply to sit on the edge and slide over and trust to the man below. Fortunately he was on the job, so we live to tell the tale. As to the efficacy of the seat, I can only say that two of my three wishes came true, which is a good average. I don't know about Betty's, for it breaks the charm to tell!

I asked our boatman afterwards why he didn't pilot his passengers up the cliff himself, and so earn the extra sixpence which is the fee for that service; and he told me that he couldn't because that was an hereditary right, controlled by one family, in which it had been

handed down for generations. The father trains his sons in the precise method of handling the climbers, so that they become very expert at it, and there is really no great danger. One member of the family is always on the lookout above the cliff, and when any visitor approaches, two members climb down to offer their services. Our boatman added that he wished he belonged to the family, because in good seasons they made a lot of money.

We pushed out into the lake again, and rowed up a little farther to another narrow beach, whence a rude flight of steps led to a shelf of rock many feet above the lake, on which are the ruins of St. Kevin's first little church. There is not much left of it, which is natural enough since it was built nearly a thousand years before America was discovered; but I took the picture of it which is reproduced opposite the next page, and which gives a faint idea of the beauty of the lake.

All during the afternoon, I had been conscious, at intervals, of a dull rumbling among the hills, and as we pushed out from the shore, I heard it again, and asked the boatman if it was thunder, for the clouds had begun to bank up along the horizon, and I remembered that we had twelve miles to ride on a side-car before we reached the station. But he said that it wasn't thunder; there was an artillery camp many miles away among the hills and the rumbling was the echo of the guns. He also assured me, after a look around, that it wouldn't rain before morning. The basis of an Irish weather prediction, as I have said before, is not at all a desire to foretell what is coming, but merely

the wish to comfort the inquirer; but in this case the prediction happened to come true.

When we got back to the inn, we found a new arrival, a very pleasant woman who had come over in the coach from Dublin. Her husband, I learned, was an inspector employed by the National Education Board, who had come to Glendalough to inspect the schools in the neighbourhood. He had started out to inspect one at once, but when he returned I had a most interesting talk with him concerning education in Ireland, and the problems which it has to face.

The Irish schools, like everything else Irish, are controlled by a central board which sits at Dublin Castle. There are sixty-six other boards and bureaus and departments sitting there, each dealing with some special branch of Irish affairs, and all of them are costly and complicated. These sixty-seven varieties must cause a pang of envy in the breast of our own Heinz, for that is ten more than he produces! The particular board which controls the schools is called the National Education Board, and, like all the others, it is in no way responsible to the Irish people. In fact, it isn't responsible to anybody. Its members are appointed for life, and it is virtually a self-perpetuating body, for vacancies are usually filled in accordance with the recommendation of a majority of its members. It is absolutely supreme in Irish educational affairs.

The elementary schools in Ireland are known as "National Schools," and each of them is controlled by a local manager, who is always either the priest or the rector of the parish—the priest if the parish is largely Roman Catholic, the rector if it is largely Protestant.

THE ROAD TO ST. KEVIN'S SEAT

THE FIRST OF ST. KEVIN'S CHURCHES

If there are enough children, both Catholic and Protestant, to fill two schools, there will be two, and the two creeds will be separated. This is always done, of course, in the cities, and in the north of Ireland there are separate schools for the Presbyterians; but in the country districts this cannot be done, so that, whatever the religious complexion of the school, there will always be a few pupils of the other denomination in it. In the villages where there is a church, as at Clondalkin, the school is usually connected with the church and in that case, if it is Roman Catholic, the teachers will be nuns.

The local manager of the school has absolute authority over it. He employs and dismisses the teachers; he prescribes the course of study; no book which he prohibits may be used in the school; any book, within very wide limits, which he wishes to use, he may use; he determines the character of the religious instruction. If he is a Catholic, this is, of course, Catholicism; if he is a Protestant, it is Protestantism—which means in Ireland either Presbyterianism in the north or Church of Irelandism in the south and west. But, as a very noted preacher remarked to me one evening, if he should happen to be a Mohammedan, he would be perfectly free to teach Mohammedanism.

The secular instruction given in the schools is supposed not to be coloured by religion, but it is inevitable that it should be; and this is especially true of Ireland, in whose history religious differences have played and still play so large a part. The result is that the memory of old wrongs, far better forgotten, is kept alive and flaming; and not only that, but the

wrongs themselves are magnified and distorted out of all resemblance to the truth. Some one has remarked that half the ill-feeling in Ireland is caused by the memory of things that never happened; and furthermore such atrocities as did occur in some far distant day are spoken of as though they happened yesterday. To every Catholic, Limerick is still "The City of the Violated Treaty," although the treaty referred to was made (and broken) in 1691, and Catholics have long since been given every right it granted them. In Derry, the "siege" is referred to constantly as though it were just over, though as a matter of fact it occurred in 1689. To shout "To hell with King Billy!" is the deadliest insult that Catholic can offer Protestant, though King Billy, otherwise William III of Orange, has been dead for more than two centuries. And when one asks the caretaker of any old ruin how the place came to be ruined, the invariable answer is "'Twas Crummell did it!" although it may have been in ruins a century before Cromwell was born.

A certain period of every day, in every National School, is set apart for religious instruction. When that period arrives, a placard on the wall bearing the words "Secular Instruction," is reversed, displaying the words "Religious Instruction" printed on the other side. Then everybody in the schoolhouse who does not belong to the denomination in which religious instruction is to be given is chased outside. Thus, as you drive about Ireland, you will see little groups of boys and girls standing idly in front of the schoolhouses, and you will wonder what they are doing there.

They are waiting for the religious instruction period to be ended.

No Protestant child is permitted to be present while Catholic instruction is going on, and no Catholic child while Protestant instruction is being given. The law used to require the teacher forcibly to eject such a child; but this raised an awful rumpus because, of course, both Catholics and Protestants are anxious to make converts, and the teachers used to say that they had conscientious scruples against driving out any child who might wish to be converted. So the law now requires the teacher to notify the child's parents; and the result is, I fancy, very painful to the child.

All of which, I will say frankly, seems to me absurd. I do not believe that religious and secular instruction can be combined in this way, especially with a mixed population, without impairing the efficiency of both. The first real struggle the Home Rule Parliament will have to face, in the opinion of my friend the inspector, is the struggle to secularise education. And this, he added, will not be a struggle of Protestant against Catholic, but of clerical against anti-clerical, for, while religious instruction is a far more vital principle with the Catholic church than with the Protestant church, Protestant preachers in Ireland are just as jealous of their power over the schools and just as determined to retain it, as the Catholic priests. The influence of the clergy in Ireland is very great, and I am inclined to think they will win the first battle; but I also think that they are certain to lose in the end.

The General Education Board keeps in touch with the local schools by employing inspectors, who visit

them three times a year and report on their condition. These visits are supposed to be unexpected, but, as a matter of fact, they seldom are.

"Word always gets about," my informant explained, with a smile, "that we are in the neighbourhood, and of course things are furbished up a bit."

"I should like to visit some of the schools," I said.

"You are at perfect liberty to do so. Any orderly person has the right to enter any school at any time."

"It is the poor little schools I wish to see," I added.

"You will find plenty of them in the west of Ireland—in fact, that is about the only kind they have there. And you will probably scare the teacher out of a year's growth when you step in. He will think you are an inspector, or a government official of some kind, who has heard something to his discredit and has come to investigate."

"Something to his discredit?" I repeated.

"Perhaps that he doesn't try to make the children in his district come to school. That is one great fault with our system. We have a compulsory education law, and every child in Ireland is supposed to go to school until he is fourteen. But no effort is made to enforce it, and not over half the children attend school with any sort of regularity. Often, of course, their parents need them; but more frequently it is because the parents are so ignorant themselves that they don't appreciate the value of an education. That isn't their fault entirely, for until thirty or forty years ago, it was practically impossible for a Catholic child to get any education, since the schools were managed by Protestants in a proselytising spirit and the priests

would not allow Catholic children to attend them.

"I have some of the old readers that were used in those days," went on the inspector, with a smile, "and I wish I had them here. They would amuse you. In one of them, the Board cut out Scott's lines,

> " 'Breathes there a man with soul so dead
> Who never to himself has said
> This is my own, my native land,'

and so on, fearing that they might have a bad effect upon Irish children by teaching them to love the land they were born in, and substituted some verses written by one of their own members. One stanza ran something like this:

> " 'I thank the goodness and the grace
> Which on my birth have smiled,
> And made me in these Christian days
> A happy English child.'

The Board claimed there was nothing sectarian about that stanza, but I wonder what the O'Malleys over in Joyce's Country thought when their children recited it? I'll bet there was a riot! And the histories had every sort of history in them except Irish history. Ireland was treated as a kind of tail to England's kite, and the English conquest was spoken of as a thing for which Ireland should be deeply grateful, and the English government was held up to admiration as the best and wisest that man could hope to devise.

"Ah, well, those days are over now, and they don't try to make a happy English child out of an Irish

Catholic any longer. The principal trouble now is that there isn't enough money to carry on the schools properly. Many of the buildings are unfit for schoolhouses, and the teachers are miserably paid. The school-books are usually poor little penny affairs, for the children can't afford more expensive ones. We visit the schools three times a year and look them over, but there isn't anything we can do. Here is the blank we are supposed to fill out."

The blank was a portentous four-page document, with many printed questions. The first section dealt with the condition of the schoolhouse and premises, the second with the school equipment, the third with the organisation, and so on. As might be expected, many of the questions have to do with the subject of religious instruction. Here are some of them:

Note objections (if any) to arrangements for Religious Instruction.

Have you examined the Religious Instruction Certificate Book?

Are the Rules as to this book observed?

Is the school *bona fide* open to pupils of all denominations?

In case of Convent or Monastery schools, paid by capitation, state is the staff sufficient.

The "Religious Instruction Certificate Book"—note the reverent capitals—is the book in which the religion of each child is certified to by its parents, so that there can be no controversy on the subject, and in which the child's attendance is carefully entered. There is also a Punishment Book, in which the teacher, when a child is punished, must enter the details of the affair for the inspector's information; and an Observation Book, in

which the inspector is supposed to note suggestions for the teacher's guidance; as well as records of attendance and proficiency, and all the usual red tape of the Circumlocution Office. I have never seen any of these books, but I fancy that, with the exception of the first-named, few teachers spend much time over them.

As I have said before, the local manager has absolute control of the school, and the poverty of the school funds is sometimes due to his desire to keep this power wholly in his own hands. The government grant is intended only as a partial support, and is supposed to be supplemented by a local contribution. But frequently no local contribution is asked for or desired, because, if one was made, the persons who made it would rightfully claim some voice in the management of the school. I have heard queer tales of managers' eccentricities. One of them read somewhere of the high educational value of teaching children to fold paper in various shapes, and so had the children in his school devote an hour every day to this exercise. It was popular with the children, but the indignation of their parents may be imagined. They were, however, quite powerless to do anything except raise a row. Another, who believed that the highest function of education was to develop the æsthetic consciousness, had the children in his school arrange rags of various colours in symphonies, and the people in his parish nearly went mad with rage.

But these, of course, were exceptions. As a rule, the course of study is utilitarian and humdrum enough, and the only colour the manager injects into it is that of religion. I note that the subjects of study men-

tioned in the inspector's blank are oral and written English, history, arithmetic, geography, object lessons and elementary science, cookery and laundry work, singing, drawing, needlework, and training of infants. This sounds ambitious enough, but I fancy it is mostly blarney, so far as the small schools are concerned, at any rate. About all most of them do is to teach the children to read and write and cipher—and these most haltingly. Twenty per cent. of the people in western Ireland are still unable to do even that.

"You are a Nationalist, I suppose?" I said, after I had finished looking through the blank.

"I am," he assented emphatically.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because it is bad for Ireland to be treated like a spoiled child. That is the way England treats us now —we can get anything we want if we yell loud enough. And it's bad for England, too. She has problems enough of her own, heaven knows, but all she can think about is Ireland. Every sensible Englishman will be glad to get rid of us, so his government can have a little time to attend to its own affairs. What Ireland needs is to be chucked overboard and told to sink or swim. We'll swim, of course, but the shore's a long way off, and it will be a hard pull; but the harder it is, the closer we Irishmen will be drawn together. Home Rule won't bring any shower of blessings—it's more apt to bring hardships for a while; but it will give us a chance to stop thinking about our wrongs, and go to work to make Ireland a country worth living in."

The time had come for us to take our leave, and the

inspector and his wife walked with us, for half a mile or so, along a beautiful path through the woods on the other side of the lower lake, and finally, with many expressions of good-will, bade us good-bye. We went on again, to the ruins of St. Kevin's seven churches, with the round tower looming high above them, while all about are the mounds and slabs of the old graveyard. All the churches are little ones—mere midgets, some of them—and they are in all states of preservation, from a few fragments of wall to the almost perfect "St. Kevin's Kitchen"—a tiny structure with high stone roof, which was set apart for the Saint's use, and which was so solidly built that it passed unharmed through the many burnings and sackings of the monastery, and still stands intact, defying the centuries. There is a queer little tower at one end of it, and a chamber above between the vault and the high roof; but most of these pre-Norman churches are small and bare of ornament, and remarkable only for their great age.

We spent some time in the graveyard, looking at the crosses and ornamented tombstones, and sculptured fragments lying about, and then we inspected the round tower; but my picture of it looks like a silhouette against the sunset sky; and finally we went on to the road, where our car was waiting. As we swung along through the fresh, cool air of the evening, we drew our jarvey into talk. He was very pessimistic about the state of the country, and apparently did not believe that Home Rule would help it much. There was no chance, he said, for a man to get ahead. It was a hard struggle for most of them to get enough to eat

and a place to sleep and a few clothes to wear. A little sickness or bad luck, and there was nothing left but the workhouse—the workmen's insurance act did not include men like him. His own wages were ten shillings ($2.40) a week, and there were many who could not earn even that. On ten shillings—eked out by such tips as he picked up from his passengers—he managed to clothe and feed himself, but that was all. Marriage was not to be thought of; there was no hope of saving money enough to go to America; in fact, there was no hope of any kind. But though he spoke bitterly enough, he didn't seem unreasonably cast down, and I dare say spent little time thinking about his hard fate except when some passing Americans like ourselves reminded him of it.

And at last, just as dusk was falling, we wound down into the valley at Rathdrum; and presently our train came along; and an hour later we were again walking along O'Connell Street. It was long past nine o'clock, but not yet dark.

CHAPTER VI

DROGHEDA THE DREARY

THERE was one more excursion we wanted to make from Dublin. That was to Drogheda (pronounced Drawda) of bitter memory; from where we hoped to drive to the scene of the battle of the Boyne, and on to Dowth and Newgrange, the sepulchres of the ancient kings of Erin, and finally to the abbeys of Mellifont and Monasterboice. So we set forth, next morning, on this pilgrimage; but fate willed that we were not to accomplish it that day.

Drogheda is about thirty miles north of Dublin, near the mouth of the River Boyne, and the ride thither, for the most part close beside the sea, is not of special interest, as the coast is flat and the only town of any importance on the way is Balbriggan, celebrated for its hosiery. Drogheda itself is an up-and-down place, built on the side of a hill. I suppose the castle which was the nucleus of the town stood on top of the hill, and houses were gradually built from it down to the ford from which the town takes its name. Encircled with walls and dominated by its castle, it was no doubt picturesque enough, but it is singularly dingy and unattractive now, with slums almost as bad as Dublin's and evidences of biting poverty everywhere.

We blundered into the fish-market, as we were exploring the streets, and watched for some time the

haggling between the dealers and the women who had come to market—a haggling so vigorous that it often threatened to end in blows. Most of the fish had been cut up into pieces, and every piece was fingered and poked and examined with a scrutiny almost microscopic; and then the would-be purchaser would make an offer for it, which would be indignantly refused. Then the dealer would name his price, and this never failed to arouse a storm of protest. Then dealer and purchaser would indulge in a few personalities, recalling with relish any discreditable facts in the other's private life or family history; and finally, sometimes, an agreement would be reached. In any case, the price was never more than a few pennies, and the reluctance with which they were produced and handed over proved how tremendously hard it had been to earn them.

Drogheda recalls Cromwell to every Irishman, usually with a malediction, for it was here that the massacre occurred which made and still makes the Great Protector anathema in Catholic Ireland. Briefly, the facts are these: The Irish Catholics, under Owen Roe O'Neill, had, naturally enough, supported Charles I against the Parliament, and when the Parliament cut off his head, promptly declared for his son, Charles II, and started in to conquer Ulster, which was largely Protestant then as now.

Cromwell realised that, before the Commonwealth would be safe, the rebellion in Ireland must be put down, and at once addressed himself to the task. He landed at Dublin about the middle of August, 1649, and marched against Drogheda, which was held by an Irish force of some three thousand men. Arrived be-

fore it, he summoned the town to surrender; upon its refusal, took it by storm, and "in the heat of action," as he afterwards wrote, ordered that the whole garrison be put to the sword. Not more than thirty of the three thousand escaped, and such Catholic priests as were found in the place were hanged. Cromwell afterwards sought to justify this cruelty on two grounds: as a reprisal for the killing of Protestants in Ulster, and as the most efficacious way to strike terror to the Irish and end the rebellion. As a matter of fact, it cannot be justified, as John Morley very clearly points out in a chapter of his life of Cromwell which should be read by every one interested in Irish history.

Some fragments of the old walls still remain, and one of the gates, which will be found pictured opposite the next page. It spans what is now the principal street, and consists of two battlemented towers, pierced with loopholes in each of their four stories, and connected by a retiring wall also loopholed. It is so well preserved because it stands on the opposite side of the town from the one Cromwell attacked, and is the most perfect specimen of the mediæval city-gate which I saw anywhere in Ireland. When one has seen it, one has exhausted the antiquarian interest of Drogheda, for all that is left of the old monastery is a battered fragment. As for the modern town, the churches are rococo and ugly, while the most imposing building is the workhouse, capable of accommodating a thousand inmates.

Having satisfied our curiosity as to Drogheda, we addressed ourselves to getting out to the battlefield and abbeys. The railroads sell combination tickets for the

whole trip, at three or four shillings each, carrying their passengers about in brakes; but these excursions do not start till June, so it was necessary that we get a car. At the station, and again at the wharf by the river, we had observed large bulletin boards with a list of the jaunting-car tariffs fixed by the corporation, and giving the price of the trip we wanted to take as ten shillings for two people. In the square by the post-office, a number of cars were drawn up along the curb, and, picking out the best-looking one, I told the jarvey where we wanted to go.

"Very good, sir," he said. "I'm the lad can take ye. Do you and your lady get right up."

"What is the fare?" I asked.

"One pound, sir."

"The legal fare is just half that," I pointed out.

"It may be," he agreed pleasantly.

We left him negligently flicking his horse with his whip, and presently we met a policeman, and told him we wanted to drive out to Monasterboice, and while we didn't mind being robbed, we didn't care to be looted, and we asked his advice. He scratched his head dubiously.

"Ye see it is like this, sir," he said; "there is no one to enforce the regulations, so the jarvies just charge what they please. I'm free to admit they have no conscience. There is one, though, who is fairly honest," and he directed us to his house. "Tell him you come from me, and he'll treat you well."

But that transaction was never closed. We found the house—grimy, dark, dirt-floored, trash-littered—with the man's wife and assorted children within; but

THE ROUND TOWER, CLONDALKIN

ST. LAWRENCE'S GATE, DROGHEDA

the woman told us that "himself" had driven out into the country and would not be back till evening. And just then it began to drizzle most dismally.

"This is no day for the trip, anyway," I said. "Suppose we wait till we get to Belfast, and run down from there."

So it was agreed, and we made our way back to the station, through a sea of sticky mud, and presently took train again for Ireland's ancient capital.

We were ready to leave Dublin for a swing clear around the coast of Ireland, and late that afternoon, having sifted our luggage to the minimum and armed ourselves cap-à-pie against every vicissitude of weather, we bade our friends at the hotel good-bye (not forgetting the bell-boy), drove to the station, and got aboard a train, which presently rolled away southwards. It was very full—the third-class crowded with soldiers in khaki bound for the camp on the Curragh of Kildare, and our own compartment jammed with a variety of people.

In one corner, a white-haired priest mumbled his breviary and watched the crowd with absent eyes, while across from him a loud-voiced woman, evidently, from her big hat and cheap finery, just home from America, was trying to overawe the friends who had gone to Dublin to meet her by an exhibition of sham gentility. In the seat with us was a plump and comfortable woman of middle age, with whom we soon got into talk about everything from children to Home Rule.

What she had to say about Home Rule was inter-

esting. Her home was somewhere down in the Vale of Tipperary, and I judged from her appearance that she was the wife of a well-to-do farmer. She was most emphatically not a Nationalist.

"It isn't them who own land, or who are buyin' a little farm under the purchase act that want Home Rule," she said. "No, no; them ones would be glad to let well enough alone. 'Tis the labourers, the farm-hands, the ditch-diggers, and such-like people, who have nothin' to lose, that shout the loudest for it. They would like a bit of land themselves, and they fancy that under Home Rule they'll be gettin' it; but where is it to come from, I'd like to know, unless off of them that has it now; and who would be trustin' the likes of them to pay for it? Ah, 'tis foolish to think of! Besides, if everybody owned land, where would we be gettin' labour to work it? No, no; 'tis time to stop, I say, and there be many who think like me."

"What wages does a labourer make?" I asked.

"From ten to twelve shillin's a week."

"All the year round?"

"There's no work in winter, so how can one be payin' wages then?"

"But how can they live on that?"

"They can't live on it," she said fiercely; "many of them ones couldn't live at all, if it wasn't for the money that's sent them from America. But what can the farmers do? If they pay higher wages, they ruin themselves. Most of them have give up in disgust and turned their land into grass."

"What do the labourers do then?" I asked.

"They move away some'rs else—to America if they can."

"Perhaps Home Rule will make things better," I suggested.

"How, I'd like to know? By raisin' taxes? That same is the first thing will happen! No, no; the solid men hereabouts don't want Home Rule—they're afraid of it; but they know well enough they must keep their tongues in their mouths, except with each other. The world's goin' crazy—that's what I think."

Now I look back on it, that conversation seems to me to sum up pretty well the situation in rural Ireland—the small farmer, handicapped by poverty and primitive methods, ground down in the markets of the world, and in turn grinding down the labourers beneath him, or turning his farm into grass, so that there is no work at all except for a few shepherds. And I believe it is true that, as a whole, only the upper class and the lower class of Irishmen really want Home Rule —the upper class from motives of patriotism, the lower class from hope of betterment; while the middle class is either lukewarm or opposed to it at heart. The middle class is, of course, always and everywhere, the conservative class, the class which fears change most and is the last to consent to it; in Ireland, it is composed largely of small farmers, who have dragged themselves a step above the peasantry and who are just finding their feet under the land purchase act, and I think their liveliest fear is that a Home Rule Parliament will somehow compel them to pay living wages

to their labourers. I can only say that I hope it will!

Outside, meanwhile, rural Ireland was unfolding itself under our eyes, varied, beautiful—and sad. The first part of it we had already traversed on our excursion to Clondalkin; beyond that village, the road emerged from the hills encircling Dublin, and soon we could see their beautiful rounded masses far to the left, forming a charming background to meadows whose greenness no words can describe. Every foot of the ground is historic; for first the train passes Celbridge where Swift's "Vanessa" dwelt, and just beyond is Lyons Hill, where Daniel O'Connell shot and killed a Dublin merchant named D'Esterre in a duel a hundred years ago—an affair, it should be added, in which D'Esterre was the aggressor; and presently the line crosses a broad and beautiful undulating down, the Curragh of Kildare, where St. Brigid pastured her flocks, and it was made in this wise:

One time, when Brigid, who was but a poor serving-girl, being the daughter of a bond-woman, was minding her cow, with no place to feed it but the side of the road, the rich man who owned the land for leagues around came by, and saw her and her cow, and a pity for her sprang into his heart.

"How much land would it take to give grass to the cow?" said he.

"No more than my cloak would cover," said she.

"I will give that," said the rich man.

"Glory be to God!" said Brigid, and she took off her cloak and laid it on the ground, and she had no sooner done so than it began to grow, until it spread miles and miles on every side.

But just then a silly old woman came by, bad cess to her, and she opened her foolish mouth and she said, "If that cloak keeps on spreading, all Ireland will be free."

And with that the cloak stopped and spread no more; but the rich man was true to his word, and Brigid held the land which it covered during all her lifetime, and it has been a famous grazing-ground ever since, though the creatures are crowded off part of it now by a great military camp.

Beyond the Curragh, the train rumbles over a wide bog, which trembles uneasily beneath it, and the black turf-cuttings stretch away as far as the eye can see; and then the Hill of Allen looms up against the horizon, where the Kings of Leinster dwelt in the old days, and the fields grow greener than ever, but for miles and miles there is not a single house.

And this is the sad part of it; for this fertile land, as rich as any in the world, supports only flocks and herds, instead of the men and women and children who once peopled it. They have all been driven away, by eviction, by famine, by the hard necessity of finding work; for there is no work here except for a few herdsmen, and has not been for half a century. For when the landlords found—or fancied they found—there was more money in grazing than in agriculture, they turned the people out and the sheep and cattle in—and the sheep and cattle are still there.

But the landscape grows ever lovelier and more lovely. Away on either hand, high ranges of hills spring into being, closing in the Golden Vale of Tipperary, and one realises it was a true vision of the

place of his birth that Denis McCarthy had when he wrote his lilting verses in praise of it:

Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the springtime of the year,
When the hawthorn's whiter than the snow,
When the feathered folk assemble and the air is all a-tremble
With their singing and their winging to and fro;
When queenly Slievenamon puts her verdant vesture on
And smiles to hear the news the breezes bring;
When the sun begins to glance on the rivulets that dance—
Ah, sweet is Tipperary in the spring!

Slievenamon is not in sight from the train—we shall see it to-morrow from the Rock of Cashel; but just ahead is a rugged hill with a singular, half-moon depression at the summit, for all the world as though some one had taken a great bite out of it—and that is precisely what happened, for once upon a time the Prince of Darkness passed that way, and when he came to the hill, being pressed with hunger, he took a bite out of the top of it; but it was not to his taste, so he spat it out again, and it fell some miles away across the valley, where it lies to this day, and is called the Rock of Cashel, while the hill is known as the Devil's Bit.

And then we came to Thurles—and to earth.

Now Thurles—the word is pronounced in two syllables, as though it were spelled Thurless—is a small town and has only two inns. We knew nothing of either, so we asked the advice of a bluff, farmer-looking man in our compartment, who was native to the place. He declined, at first, to express an opinion, saying it would ill become him to exalt one inn at the

expense of the other, since the keepers of both were friends of his; but after some moments of cogitation, he said that he would recommend one of them, since it was kept by a poor widow woman. I confess this did not seem to me a convincing reason for going there; but our new-found friend took charge of us, and, having seen us safely to the platform, called loudly for "Jimmy," and an old man presently shambled forward, to whose care, with many wishes for a pleasant journey, we were committed.

The old man proved to be the driver of a very ramshackle omnibus, in which we were presently rumbling along a wide and dreary street. The hotel, when we got to it, proved bare and cheerless, with every corner crowded with cots. The landlady explained that the great horse-fair opened in a day or two, and that she was preparing for the crowds which always attended it; but finally she found a room for us away up in the attic, and left us alone with a candle. The weather had turned very cold, and we were tired and uncomfortable, and even our electric torch could not make the room look otherwise than dingy; and I think, for a moment, we regretted that we had come to Ireland—and then, presto! change . . .

For there came a knock at the door, and a soft-voiced maid entered with towels and hot water, and asked if there wasn't something else she could do for us; and then another came, to see if there was anything *she* could do, and between them they lapped us in such a warmth of Irish welcome that we were soon aglow. I left them blarneying Betty and went down to the shining little bar, where I smoked a pipe in company

with two or three habitués and the barmaid, and had a most improving talk about the state of the country. They were as hungry to hear about America as I was to hear about Ireland, and it was very late before I mounted the stairs again.

All through the night, we were awakened at intervals by the tramping and neighing of the horses arriving for the fair.

CHAPTER VII

HOLY CROSS AND CASHEL OF THE KINGS

If one doesn't like bacon and eggs, one must go without breakfast in Ireland, unless one likes fish, or is content with bread and butter. Every evening Betty would have a colloquy with the maid, which ran something like this:

"What will ye be wantin' for breakfast, miss?"

"What can we have?"

"Oh, anything ye like, miss."

"Well, what, for instance?"

"There's bacon and eggs, miss, and there's fish."

We usually took bacon and eggs, for fish seemed out of place on the breakfast-table. Besides, we were sure to encounter it later at dinner.

"And will ye have coffee or tay, miss?" the maid would continue.

We took coffee once, and after that we took tea. The tea is good, though strong, and it seems somehow to suit the climate; but one sip of Irish coffee will be enough for most people.

So next morning we sat down to our breakfast of tea and bacon and eggs with a good appetite. The cloth was not as clean as it might have been, but the eggs were fresh and the bacon sweet, and the bread and butter were delicious—as they are all over Ireland—and the tea tasted better than I had ever imagined tea could taste, and outside the sun was shining brightly,

but no brighter than the face of the maid who waited on us, and there was a pleasant stir of movement up and down the street, for it was Saturday and market-day, so that it was quite impossible to be otherwise than happy and content. And presently the car I had arranged for the night before drove up, and we were off on the four-mile drive to the ruins of Holy Cross Abbey.

We had to go slowly, at first, for the street was crowded with people come to market, and with the wares exposed for sale. There were little carts heaped high with brown turf, which might be bought for two or three shillings a load, though every load represented as many days' hard work; there were red calves in little pens, and chickens in crates, and eggs and butter in baskets; and there were a lot of pedlars offering all sorts of dry-goods and hardware and odds and ends to the country-people who stood stolidly around, apparently rather sorry they had come. The faces were typically Irish—the men with short noses and shaved lips and little fuzzy side-whiskers, and the women with cheeks almost startlingly ruddy; but there wasn't a trace of those rollicking spirits which the Irish in books and on the stage seldom fail to display.

Once clear of the crowd, we rolled out of the town, over a bridge above the railway, and along a pleasant road, past little thatched cottages overflowing with children; meeting, from time to time, a family driving to town, all crowded together on a little cart behind a shaggy donkey, the men with their feet hanging down, the women scrooched up under their shawls, with their

knees as high as their chins. They all stared at us curiously; but our driver passed them by with disdain, as not worth his notice, and from a word or two he let fall, it was evident that he considered them beneath him.

The road was rather higher than the surrounding country, and we could see across it, north and south, for many miles; then it descended to a winding stream, the Suir, flowing gently between rushy banks, and presently we saw ahead a great pile of crumbling buildings—and then we were at Holy Cross, one of the most exquisite and interesting of the hundreds of ruins which cover Ireland.

That word "hundreds" is no exaggeration. In a single day's journey, one will see scores; and as one goes on thus, day after day, one begins to realise what a populous and wealthy country Ireland was eight hundred years ago, how crowded with castles and monasteries; and I think the deepest impression the traveller bears away with him is the memory of these battered and deserted remnants of former grandeur. And yet it is not quite just to blame England for them, as most of the Irish do. It was the English, of course, who broke up the monasteries and destroyed many of the castles; but the march of the centuries would probably have wrought much the same ruin in the end; for men no longer live in castles, finding homes far pleasanter; and it is not now to monks they go for learning, nor is the right of sanctuary needed as it was in the time when might made right, and a poor man's only hope of safety lay in getting to some altar ahead of his pursuers. Yet one cannot tread these beautiful places

without a certain sadness and regret—regret for the vanished pomp and ceremony, the cowled processions and torch-lit feasts, the shuffle of feet and the songs of minstrels—in a word, for the old order, so impressive, so picturesque—and so cruel!

Holy Cross was a great place in those days, for, as its name indicates, it held as its most precious relic a fragment of the True Cross, given by the Pope, in 1110, to Donough O'Brien, grandson of Brian Boru, and thousands of pilgrims came to pray before it. The relic had many strange vicissitudes, in the centuries that followed, but it was not lost, as was the one which the Cross of Cong enshrined, and it is preserved to-day in the Ursuline convent at Blackrock. Holy Cross had better luck than most, for, at the dissolution in 1563, it was granted to the Earl of Ormonde, a friend who cherished it. But the end came with the passing of the Stuarts, and now it is deserted save for the old woman who acts as caretaker, and who lives in a little ivy-covered house built against the wall of the great church.

She opened the iron gate which bars access to the ruins, and let us wander about them at will, for which we were grateful. The plan of the place is that common to almost all monastic establishments: a cruciform church, with the altar at the east end, as nearest Jerusalem, the arms of the cross, or transepts, stretching north and south, and the body of the cross, or nave, extending to the west, where the main entrance was; a door from the nave opened to the south into a court around which were the cloisters and the domestic buildings—the refectory, the chapter-house and the dormi-

HOLY CROSS ABBEY, FROM THE CLOISTERS

THE MIGHTY RUINS ON THE ROCK OF CASHEL

tories; and still beyond these were the granaries and storehouses and guest-houses and various out-buildings. Also, like most others, it stands on the bank of a river, for the monks were fond of fishing,—and had no mind to go hungry on Friday!

The roof of the church has fallen in, but it is otherwise well-preserved, even to the window-tracery; and the square tower above the crossing is apparently as firm as ever. The whole place abounds in beautiful detail, proof of the loving workmanship that was lavished on it; but its bright particular gem is a little sanctum in the north transept, surrounded by delicate twisted pillars and covered by a roof beautifully groined. Whether this was the sanctuary of the relic, or the place where the monks were laid from death to burial, or the tomb of some saintly Abbot, no one knows; but there it is, a living testimony to the beauty of Irish artistry.

The cloister is now a grass-grown court, and only a few arches remain of the colonnade which once surrounded it; but the square of domestic buildings about it is better preserved than one will find almost anywhere else, and deserves careful exploration.

As was the custom in most of the abbeys, the friars, when they died, were laid to rest beneath the flags of the church floor; the church is still used as a burial place, and is cluttered with graves, marked by stones leaning at every angle. One's feet sink deep into the mould—a mould composed, so the caretaker told us in awestruck voice, of human dust.

We mounted the narrow staircase to the tower roof and sat there for a long time, gazing down on these

lichened and crumbling walls, restoring them in imagination and repeopling them with the White Brothers and the pilgrims and the innumerable hangers-on who once crowded them. It required no great stretch of fancy to conjure the old days back—that day, for instance, three centuries and more ago, when Red Hugh O'Donnell, marching southward from Galway with his army to join the Spaniards at Kinsale, came down yonder white highway, and stopped at the monastery gate, and invoked a blessing from the Abbot. And the Abbot, with all the monks in attendance, carried the fragment of the Cross in its gilded shrine out to the gate, and held it up for all to see, and Red Hugh and his men knelt down there in the road, while the priest prayed that through them Ireland might win freedom. And even as they knelt, a wild-eyed rapparee came pounding up with the news that a great force of English was at Cashel, a few miles away; so Red Hugh had to flee with his men over the hills to the westward, to die a year later, poisoned by a man he thought his friend.

We descended after a time, and crossed the river to have a look at the Abbey from that vantage-ground; and at last, most regretfully, we mounted the car again and drove back to Thurles. An hour later, we were at Cashel—the one place in all Ireland best worth seeing.

I write that in all earnestness. If the traveller has time for only one excursion out of Dublin, he should hesitate not an instant, but go to Cashel. I shall try to tell why.

Cashel is a rock some three hundred feet high dropped down among the pastures along the northern

edge of the Golden Vale of Tipperary. I do not know how the geologists explain it. How the Irish explain it I have told already. Its sides are of the steepest, and its flat top is about two acres in extent. In itself it is a natural fortress, and it was of course seized upon as such by the dim people who fought back and forth over the length and breadth of Ireland in the far ages before history begins. At first it was strengthened by a wall around the top. Any such defensive wall in Ireland is called a cashel, as one of earth is called a rath, and there are both raths and cashels all up and down the land, for forts have always been sorely needed there; but this is the Cashel above all others.

Buildings were put up inside the wall, rude at first, but gradually growing more elaborate, and when the real history of the place begins, say about fifteen centuries ago, it was already the seat of the Kings of Munster, that is of the southern half of Ireland. Hither about 450 came St. Patrick to convert the King and his household; it was while preaching here that he is said first to have plucked the trefoil or shamrock to illustrate the principle of the Three-in-One; Brian Boru strengthened its fortifications; and in 1134 was consecrated here that wonderful chapel of Cormac McCarthy, King of Munster, which still endures as a most convincing demonstration of the beauty of old Irish architecture. Then a round tower was put up, and then a castle, and then a great cathedral, for King Murtough had granted the Rock to "the religious of Ireland," and the Archbishop of Cashel came, before long, to be nearly as powerful as the great Archbishop of Armagh; and then a monastery was built, and

schools, under the sway first of the Benedictines and later of the Cistercians. All this made a stupendous group of buildings, a splendid and impressive symbol of Cashel's greatness.

But under Elizabeth, the scale turned. Dermot O'Hurley, Archbishop of Cashel, was taken prisoner and carried to Dublin and hanged. His successor, Milar Magrath, abjured his religion, under Elizabethan pressure, and to prove the sincerity of his Protestantism, married not once, but twice. From that time on, the place was used as a Protestant cathedral, until, in 1744, Archbishop Price succeeded to the see.

Now the Archbishop was a man who loved his ease, and though his palace was situated conveniently enough at the foot of the Rock, his church was perched most inconveniently upon it, and the only way even an archbishop could get to it was to walk. Price spent a lot of money trying to build a carriage road up the Rock, but finally he gave it up and procured from Parliament an act decreeing that, whereas, "in several dioceses, cathedral churches are so incommodiously situated that they cannot be resorted to for divine service," power should be given the chief governor, with assent of the privy council, to "remove the site of a cathedral church to some convenient parish church." Two years later, in 1749, an act was passed directing that the cathedral be removed from the Rock into the town. This was, of course, impossible in any but a metaphorical sense; but, incredible as it may seem, since he couldn't remove it, Price determined to destroy it, secured from the government the loan of a regiment of soldiers, and set them to work tearing it down. They

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CASHEL OF THE KINGS

stripped off the leaden roof, knocked in the vaulting, and left the place the ruin that it is to-day. It might be remarked, in passing, that here is one ruin "Crummell" didn't make. George II was King of England in 1749, and Cromwell had been dead nearly a hundred years.

I shall never forget my first glimpse of this stupendous pile of buildings, looming high in air, all turrets and towers, like those fairy palaces which Maxfield Parrish loves to paint. A short branch runs from Goold's Cross to Cashel, and it was from the windows of the rickety little train we peered, first on this side and then on that—and then, quite suddenly, away to the left, we saw the Rock, golden-grey, high against the sky, so fairy-like and ethereal that it seemed impossible it could be anything more than a wonderful vision or mirage. And then the train stopped, and we jumped out, and hurried from the station, and presently we were following the path around the Rock. But that was too slow, and with a simultaneous impulse we left the path and climbed the wall, and hastened upward over rock and heather, straight toward this new marvel. We skirted another wall, and climbed a stile —and then we were stopped by a high iron gate, secured with a chain and formidable padlock.

But we had scarcely time to feel the shock of disappointment, when we saw hastening upward toward us a sturdy old man, with weather-beaten face framed by a shock of reddish-grey hair and beard, and a moment later we had the pleasure of meeting John Minogue, the caretaker—the most accomplished caretaker, I venture to say, in all the length and breadth of Ire-

land. For, as we soon found, he has the history and legends and architectural peculiarities of Cashel at his tongue's end—he knows them intimately, accurately, in every detail, for he has lived with them all his life and loves them.

He unlocked the iron gate and ushered us in, and chased away the rabble of ragged children who had followed him up from the village; and then began one of the most delightful experiences that I have ever had. I almost despair of attempting to describe it.

At our feet lay the Vale of Tipperary—an expanse of greenest green stretching unbroken to the foot of a great mountain-chain, the Galtees, thirty miles away. Farther to the north, we could just discern the gap of the Devil's Bit, beyond which lay Limerick and the Shannon. And then we walked to the other side of the Rock, and there, away in the distance, towered the great bulk of "queenly Slievenamon," the Mountain of Fair Women, and as we stood there gazing at it, John Minogue told us how it got its name.

It was in the days when Cormac son of Art was King of Erin, and Finn son of Cumhal, Finn the Fair, he of the High Deeds,—whose name I shall spell hereafter as it is pronounced, Finn MacCool—had been declared by birthright and by swordright Captain of that invincible brotherhood of fighting-men, the Fianna. Finn was past his youth, and had a comely son, Ossian the sweet singer; but at times his spirit hung heavy on him, for his wife was dead, and no man has peaceful slumber who is without a fitting mate. So he looked about for one to share his bed, but found it hard to choose, for there were many fine women in Erin; and

at last in his perplexity he sat himself down on the summit of Slievenamon, and said that all who wished might run a race from the bottom to the top, and she who won should be his wife. So it was done, and the race was won by Gráinne, daughter of the great Cormac himself. The feast was set for a fortnight later, in the king's hall at Tara—and what happened there we shall hear later on.

We might have been standing yet upon the Rock, gazing out across that marvellous valley, if John Minogue had not dragged us away to see the wonders of the place. Not the least of them is the weather-beaten stone cross, with the crucifixion on one side and an effigy of St. Patrick on the other, which stands just outside the castle entrance, on the rude pedestal where the Kings of Munster were crowned in the old, old days. Here it was, perhaps, that St. Patrick himself stood when he stooped to pluck the trefoil, and that King Ængus was baptised. Legend has it that, as he was performing that ceremony, the Saint, without knowing it, drove the spiked end of his crozier through the King's foot. Ængus said never a word, nor made complaint, thinking it part of the rite; but when the Saint went to take up his crozier and saw what he had done, he blessed the King and promised that none of that royal stock should die of wounds forever. Perhaps the promise was not "forever," for, five centuries later, Brian Boru, the greatest of them all, was killed in battle at Clontarf, as I have told.

But the greatest wonder of all at Cashel is the jewel of a chapel built by Cormac and standing as firm today as when its stones were laid, eight centuries ago.

It nestles in between the choir and south transept of the later cathedral, and its entrance is the most magnificent doorway of its kind existing anywhere on this earth.

It is round-headed, as in all Irish Romanesque, with five deep mouldings rich in dog-tooth and lozenge ornamentation, and though it is battered and weather-worn, it is still most beautiful and impressive.

Inside, the chapel is divided into nave and chancel, both very small, but decorated with a richness and massiveness almost oppressive—twisted columns, arcaded walls, dog-tooth mouldings, rounded arches, traceried surfaces, sculptured capitals, and I know not what beside. Facing the choir is a stone sarcophagus, beautifully ornamented with characteristic Celtic serpent work, as may be seen in the photograph. It is called "King Cormac's Coffin." It was in the small apartment over the nave and under the steep stone roof that Cormac was struck down by an assassin, as he knelt in prayer.

It was something of a relief to get out into the high, roofless cathedral, where one feels at liberty to draw a deep breath. The cathedral is rich with sculptures, too; but I shall not attempt to describe them. I can only hope that it may be your fortune to visit the place, some day, and have John Minogue to take you round. But, let me warn you, he does not waste himself on the unsympathetic. While we stood admiring the sculptures of St. Patrick and St. Brigid and eleven of the apostles, in the north transept (the sculptor omitted St. Matthew for some unknown reason; or perhaps our guide told me why and I have forgotten); as we stood

there gazing in delight at these inimitable figures, a party of four or five entered the church, and stood staring vacantly about.

"See here, Mr. Minogue," I said, after a time, "we can amuse ourselves for a while, if you'd like to look after those other people."

Minogue shot one glance at them.

"No," he said; "they're not worth it. Now come—I must show you the round tower."

A beauty the tower is, with walls four feet thick, built of great blocks of stone, and a little round-headed doorway, twelve feet above the ground. It stands eighty-five feet high, and is wonderfully preserved; but when we looked up it from the inside, we saw that the old masons did not succeed in getting it quite true.

It was an hour later—or perhaps two hours later—that we emerged again from the iron gate, and found the rabble of children still waiting. They closed in on us at once, murmuring something in a queer half-mumble, half-whisper, of which we could not understand a word.

"What is it they're saying?" we asked.

"They're saying," explained Minogue, "that if your honour will toss a penny amongst them, they will fight for it; or, if you'd rather, they will put up a prayer for you, so that you will get safe home again. They don't consider that begging, you see, since they offer some return for the money."

And then, as they hustled us more closely, he turned and shouted something at them—some magic incanta-

tion, I fancy, for they scurried away as though the devil was after them. I regretted, afterwards, that I had not asked him for the formula—but in the end, we found one of our own, as you shall hear.

Our guide insisted that we go down with him to his house and see his books, and write our names in his album, and have a cup of tea. He lived in an ivy-covered cottage, just under the Rock, and his old wife came out to welcome us; and we sat and talked and wrote our names and looked at his books—one had been given him by Stephen Gwynne, and others by other writers whose names I have forgotten; but the treasure of his library was a huge volume, carefully wrapped against possible soiling, which, when unwrapped, proved to be a copy of Arthur Champneys' "Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture," and with gleaming face our host turned to the preface and showed us where Champneys acknowledged his indebtedness for much valuable assistance to John Minogue, of the Rock of Cashel.

We bade him good-bye, at last, and made our way down through the quaint little town, which snuggles against one side of the Rock—a town of narrow, crooked streets, and thatched houses, and friendly women leaning over their half-doors, and multitudinous children; but the most vivid memory I have of it, is of the pleasant tang of turf smoke in the air. And presently we came out again upon the road leading to the station.

From the top of the Rock we had seen, in the middle of a field not far away, a ruin which seemed very extensive, and Minogue told us that it was Hore Abbey, a Cistercian monastery built about 1272, but had added

that it was scarcely worth visiting after Cashel. That was perhaps true—few ruins can compare with Cashel—but when we saw the grey bulk of the old abbey looming above the wall at our left, we decided to get to it, if we could.

It required some resolution, for the way thither lay across a very wet and muddy pasture, with grass knee-high in places, and Betty would probably have declined to venture but for the assurance that there are no snakes in Ireland. The nearer we got to the ruin, the worse the going grew, but we finally scrambled inside over a broken wall, and sat down on a block of fallen masonry to look about us.

The mist, which had been thickening for the last half hour, had, almost imperceptibly, turned to rain, and this was mizzling softly down, shrouding everything as with a pearly veil, and adding a beauty and sense of mystery to the place which it may have lacked at other times. But it seemed to us singularly impressive, with its narrow lancet windows, and plain, square pillars. Such vaulting as remains, at the crossing and in the chapels, is very simple, and the whole church was evidently built with a dignity and severity of detail which modern builders might well imitate. It seems a shame that it is not kept in better order and a decent approach built to it; but I suppose the Board of Works, whose duty it is to care for Irish ruins, finds itself overburdened with the multiplicity of them.

We sat there absorbing the centuries-old atmosphere, until a glance at my watch told me that we must hurry if we would catch our train. We *did* hurry, though with many a backward glance, for one is reluctant to

leave a beautiful place which one may never see again; but we caught the train, and the last glimpse we had of Cashel was as of some gigantic magic palace, suspended in air and shrouded in mist.

CHAPTER VIII

ADVENTURES AT BLARNEY

It was getting on toward evening when we caught our train on the main line at Goold's Cross. The storm had swept southward, and the hills there were masked with rain, but the Golden Vale had emerged from its baptism more lush, more green, more dazzling than ever. We left it behind, at last, plunged into a wood of lofty and magnificent trees, and paused at Limerick Junction, with its great echoing train-shed and wide network of tracks and switches. Beyond the Junction, one gets from the train a splendid view of the picturesque Galtees, the highest mountains in the south of Ireland, fissured and gullied and folded into deep ravines in the most romantic way.

The train had been comparatively empty thus far, and we had rejoiced in a compartment to ourselves; but as we drew into the station at Charleville, we were astonished to see a perfect mob of people crowding the platform, with more coming up every minute. The instant the train stopped, the mob snatched open the doors and swept into it like a tidal wave. When the riot subsided a bit, we found that four men and two girls were crowded in with us, and the corridor outside was jammed with people standing up. We asked the cause of the excitement, and were told that there had been a race-meeting at Charleville, which had attracted a great crowd from all over the south-eastern

part of Ireland, especially from Cork, thirty-five miles away.

Our companions soon got to chaffing each other, and it developed that all of them, even the two girls, had been betting on the races, and I inferred that they had all lost every cent they had. It was assumed, as a matter of course, that nobody would go to a race-meeting without putting something on the horses; it was also assumed that every normal man and woman would make almost any sacrifice to get to a meeting; and there was a lively discussion as to possible ways and means of attending another meeting which was to be held somewhere in the neighbourhood the following week. And finally, it was apparent that everybody present had contemplated the world through the bottom of a glass more than once that day. As I looked at them and listened to them, I began to understand the cause of at least a portion of Irish poverty.

It was a good-humoured crowd, in spite of its reverses, and when a girl with a tambourine piped up a song, she was loudly encouraged to go on and even managed to collect a few pennies, found unexpectedly in odd pockets. Then one of the men in our compartment told a story; I have forgotten what it was about, but it was received uproariously; and then everybody talked at once as loud as possible, and the clatter was deafening.

We were glad when we got to Cork.

Cork is superficially a sort of smaller Dublin. It has one handsome thoroughfare, approached by a handsome bridge, and the rest of the town is composed for

the most part of dirty lanes between ugly houses. In Dublin, the principal street and bridge are dedicated to O'Connell; in Cork both bridge and street are named after St. Patrick—that is about the only difference, except that Cork lacks that atmosphere of charm and culture which makes Dublin so attractive.

We took a stroll about the streets, that Saturday night after dinner, and found them thronged with people, as at Dublin; but here there was a large admixture of English soldiers and sailors, come up from Queenstown to celebrate. Many of them had girls on their arms, and those who had not were evidently hoping to have, and the impression one got was that Cork suffers a good deal from the evils of a garrison town. There is a tradition that the girls of Cork are unusually lovely; but I fear it is only a tradition. Or perhaps the lovely ones stay at home on Saturday night.

Sunday dawned clear and bright, and as soon as we had breakfasted, we set out for the most famous spot in the vicinity of Cork, and perhaps in all Ireland, Blarney Castle. Undoubtedly the one Irish tradition which is known everywhere is that of the blarney stone; "blarney" itself has passed into the language as a noun, an adjective, and a verb; and the old tower of which the stone is a part has been pictured so often that its appearance is probably better known than that of any other ruin in Europe. Blarney is about five miles from Cork, and the easiest way of getting there is by the light railway, which runs close beside a pretty stream, in which, this bright morning, many fishermen were trying their luck. And at last, high above the trees,

we saw the rugged keep which is all that is left of the old castle. Almost at once the train stopped at the station, which is just outside the entrance to the castle grounds.

"The Groves of Blarney" are still charming, though they have changed greatly since the day when Richard Milliken wrote his famous song in praise of them. There were grottoes and beds of flowers, and terraces and rustic bowers there then, and statues of heathen gods and nymphs so fair all standing naked in the open air; but misfortune overtook the castle's owner and

> The muses shed a tear when the cruel auctioneer,
> With his hammer in his hand, to sweet Blarney came.

So the statues vanished, together with the grottoes and the terraces; but the sweet silent brook still ripples through the grounds, and its banks are covered with daisies and buttercups, and guarded by giant beeches. Very lovely it is, so that one loiters to watch the dancing water, even with Blarney Castle close at hand.

Approached thus, the massive donjon tower, set on a cliff and looming a hundred and twenty feet into the air, is most impressive. To the left is a lower and more ornamental fragment of the old castle, which, in its day, was the strongest in all Munster. Cormac McCarthy built it in the fifteenth century as a defence against the English, and it was held by the Irish until Cromwell's army besieged and captured it. Around the top of the tower is a series of machicolations, or openings between supporting corbels, through which the besieged, in the old days, could drop stones and

BLARNEY CASTLE

pour molten lead and red-hot ashes and such-like things down upon the assailants, and it is in the sill of one of these openings that the famous Blarney stone is fixed.

Legend has it that, once upon a time, in the spring of the year when the waters were running high, Cormac McCarthy was returning home through the blackness of the night, and when he put his horse at the last ford, he thought for a moment he would be swept away, so swift and deep was the current. But his horse managed to keep its feet, and just as it was scrambling out upon the farther bank, McCarthy heard a scream from the darkness behind him, and then a woman's voice crying for help. So he dashed back into the stream, and after a fearful struggle, dragged the woman to safety.

In the dim light, McCarthy could see only that she was old and withered; but her eyes gleamed like a cat's when she looked at him; and she called down blessings upon him for his courage, and bade him, when he got home, go out upon the battlement and kiss a certain stone, whose location she described to him. Thereupon she vanished, and so McCarthy knew it was a witch he had rescued. Next morning, he went out upon the battlement and found the stone and kissed it, and thereafter was endowed with an eloquence so sweet and persuasive that no man or woman could resist it.

Such is the legend, and it may have had its origin in the soft, delutherin speeches with which Dermot McCarthy put off the English, when they called upon him to surrender his castle. Certain it is that it was fixed

finally and firmly in the popular mind by the stanza which Father Prout added to Milliken's song:

> There is a stone there, that whoever kisses
> Oh! he never misses to grow eloquent.
> 'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
> Or become a member of Parliament.
> A clever spouter he'll sure turn out, or
> An out and outer, to be let alone;
> Don't hope to hinder him, or to bewilder him,
> Sure he's a pilgrim from the Blarney Stone.

And ever since then, troops of pilgrims have thronged to Blarney to kiss the stone.

The top of the tower is reached by a narrow staircase which goes round and round in the thickness of the wall, with narrow loopholes of windows here and there looking out upon the beautiful country, and a door at every level giving access to the great, square interior. The floors have all fallen in and there is only the blue sky for roof, but the graceful old fireplaces still remain and some traces of ornamentation, and the ancient walls, eighteen feet thick in places, and with mortar as hard as the rock, are wonderful to see; and finally you come out upon the battlemented parapet, with miles and miles of Ireland at your feet.

But it wasn't to gaze at the view we had come to Blarney Castle, it was to kiss the stone, and we went at once to look for it. It was easy enough to find, for, on top of the battlement above it, a row of tall iron spikes has been set, and the stone itself is tied into the wall by iron braces, for one of Cromwell's cannon-balls almost dislodged it, and it is worn and polished by the

application of thousands of lips. But to kiss it—well, that is another story!

For the sill of which the stone forms a part is some two feet lower than the level of the walk around the parapet, and, to get to it, there is a horrid open space some three feet wide to span, and below that open space is a sheer drop of a hundred and twenty feet to the ground below. When one looks down through it, all that one can see are the waving tree-tops far, far beneath. There is just one way to accomplish the feat, and that is to lie down on your back, while somebody grasps your ankles, and then permit yourself to be shoved backward and downward across the abyss until your mouth is underneath the sill.

Betty and I looked at the stone and at the yawning chasm and then at each other; and then we went away and sat down in a corner of the battlement to think it over.

We had supposed that there would be some experienced guides on hand, anxious to earn sixpence by assisting at the rite, as there had been at St. Kevin's bed; but the tower was deserted, save for ourselves.

"Well," said Betty, at last, "there's one thing certain—I'm not going away from here until I've kissed that stone. I'd be ashamed to go home without kissing it."

"So would I," I agreed; "but I'd prefer that to hanging head downward over that abyss. Anyway, I won't take the responsibility of holding you by the heels while you do it. Perhaps some one will come up, after awhile, to help."

So we looked at the scenery and talked of various

things; but all either of us thought about was kissing the stone, and we touched on it incidentally now and then, and then shied away from it, and pretended to think of something else. Presently we heard voices on the stair, and a man and two women emerged on the parapet. We waited, but they didn't approach the stone, they just looked around at the landscape; and finally Betty inquired casually if they were going to kiss the Blarney stone.

"Kiss the Blarney stone?" echoed the man, who was an Englishman. "I should think not! It's altogether too risky!"

"But it seems a shame to go away without kissing it," Betty protested.

"Yes, it does," the other agreed; "but I was here once before, and I fought that all out then. It's really just a silly old legend, you know—nobody believes it!"

Now to my mind silly old legends are far more worthy of belief than most things, but it would be folly to say so to an Englishman. So the conversation dropped, and presently he and his companions went away, and Betty and I sat down again and renewed our conversation.

And then again we heard voices, and this time it was two American women, well along in years. They asked us if we knew which was the Blarney stone, and we hastened to point it out to them, and explained the process of kissing it. There were postcards illustrating the process on sale at the entrance, and we had studied them attentively before we came in, so that we knew the theory of it quite well.

"We were just sitting here trying to screw up courage to do it," Betty added.

The newcomers looked at the stone, and then at the abyss.

"Well, *I'll* never do it!" they exclaimed simultaneously, and they contented themselves with throwing a kiss at it; and then *they* went away, and Betty and I, both rather pale around the gills, continued to talk of ships and shoes and sealing-wax. But I saw in her eyes that somehow or other she was going to kiss the stone.

And then a tall, thin man came up the stair, and *he* asked us where the stone was, and we showed him, and he looked at it, and then he glanced down into the intervening gulf, and drew back with a shudder.

"Not for me," he said. "Not—for—me!"

"We've come all the way from America," said Betty, "and we simply *can't* go away until we've kissed it."

"Well, *I've* come all the way from New Zealand, madam," said the man, "but I wouldn't think for a minute of risking my life like that."

"It used to be a good deal more dangerous than it is now," I pointed out, as much for my own benefit as for his. "They used to take people by the ankles and hold them upside down outside the battlement. I suppose they dropped somebody over, for those spikes were put there along the top to stop it. If the people who hold your legs are steady, there really isn't any danger now."

The New Zealander took another peep over into space.

"No sirree!" he said. "No sir—ree!"

But he didn't go away. Instead, he sat down and began to talk; and I fancied I could see in his eyes some such uneasy purpose as I saw in Betty's.

And then a boy of twelve or fourteen came up. He was evidently native to the neighbourhood, and I asked him if he had ever kissed the stone.

"I have, sir, many a time," he said.

"Would you mind doing it again, so that we can see just how it is done?"

He readily consented, and lay down on his back with his head and shoulders over the gulf, and the New Zealander took one leg and I took the other. Then the boy reached his hands above his head and grasped the iron bars which ran down inside the battlement to hold the stone in place.

"Now, push me down," he said.

My heart was in my mouth as we pushed him down, for it seemed an awful distance, though I knew we couldn't drop him because he wasn't very heavy; and then we heard a resounding smack.

"All right," he called. "Pull me up."

We pulled him up, and in an instant he was on his feet.

"That's all there is to it," he said, and sauntered off.

"Hm-m-m!" grunted the New Zealander, and sat down again.

I gazed at the landscape for a minute or two, my hands deep in my pockets.

When I turned around, Betty had her hat and coat off, and was spreading her raincoat on the parapet opposite the stone.

"What are you going to do?" I demanded sternly.

She sat down on the raincoat with her back to the abyss.

"Come on, you two, and hold me," she commanded.

I suppose I might have refused, but I didn't. The truth is, I wanted her to kiss the stone as badly as she wanted to; so I knelt on one side of her and the New Zealander knelt on the other, and we each grasped an ankle. She groped for the iron bars, found them after an instant, and drew herself toward them.

"Now, push me down," she said.

We did; and as soon as we heard the smack, we hauled her up again, her face aglow with triumph. It took her some minutes to get her hair fixed, for most of the hair-pins had fallen out. When she looked up, she saw that I had taken off my coat.

"What are you going to do?" she demanded, in much the same tone that I had used.

"I'm going to kiss that stone," I said. "Do you suppose I'd go away now, without kissing it? Why, I'd never hear the last of it! Get hold of my legs," and I sat down, keeping my eyes carefully averted from the hundred-and-twenty-foot drop.

"Oh, but look here," she protested, "I don't know whether I'm strong enough to hold you."

"Yes, you are," I said, making sure that there was nothing in my trousers' pockets to fall out. "Now, then!"

Just then four or five Irish girls came out upon the tower, and Betty, stricken with the fear of losing me, asked them if they wouldn't help, and they said they would; so, with one man and four women holding on to

my legs, I let myself over backwards. One doesn't realise how much two feet is, till one tries to take it backwards; it seemed to me that I was hanging in mid-air by my heels, so I kissed a stone hastily and started to come up.

"That wasn't it," protested one of the girls who had been watching me; "you've got to go farther down."

So they pushed me farther down, and I saw the smooth, worn stone right before my eyes.

"Is this it?" I asked.

"Yes," she said; so I kissed it, and in a moment was right side up again; and I don't know when I have felt prouder.

And then the New Zealander, his face grim and set, began to take things out of his trousers' pockets.

"If you people will hold me," he said, "I'll do it too."

So we held him, and *he* did it.

Then he and I offered to hold the Irish girls, but they refused, giggling, and as there was nothing more to do on top of that tower, we went down again, treading as if on air, more elated than I can say.

That sense of elation endures to this day, and I would earnestly advise every one who visits Blarney Castle to kiss the stone. I am not aware that I am any more eloquent than I ever was, and Betty never had any real need to kiss it, but to go to Blarney without doing so is—well, is like going to Paris without seeing the Louvre, or to the Louvre without seeing the Winged Victory and the Venus of Milo. Really, there isn't any danger, if you have two people of aver-

age strength holding you; and there isn't even any very great sense of danger, since your back is to the abyss and you can't see it. My advice is to do it at once, as soon as you get to the top of the tower, without stopping to think about it too long. After that, with a serene mind, you can look at the view, which is very, very lovely, and explore the ruin, which is one of the most interesting and noteworthy in Ireland.

We sat down on a bench just outside the castle entrance to rest after our exertions. There was a young man and woman on the bench, and in about a minute we were talking together. It turned out that they were members of Alexander Marsh's company, then touring Ireland in classical repertoire, and would open in Cork in "The Three Musketeers" the following evening. I had never heard of Alexander Marsh, but they both pronounced his name with such awe and reverence that I fancied he must be a second Irving, and I said at once that we should have to see the play. We went on to talk about that high-hearted story, which I love; and I noticed a growing embarrassment in our companions.

"See here," said the man at last, "you know the book so well and think so much of it, that I'm afraid the play will disappoint you. For one thing, we can't put on Richelieu. The play makes rather a fool of him, and the Catholics over here would get angry in a minute if we made a fool of a Cardinal, even on the stage. So we have to call him Roquefort, and leave out the Cardinal altogether, which, of course, spoils the whole point of the plot. It's a pity, too, because his robes

are gorgeous. Of course it doesn't make so much difference to people who haven't read the book—and mighty few over here have; but I'm afraid you wouldn't like it."

I was afraid so, too; so we promised we wouldn't come.

And then they went on to tell us about themselves. They were married, it seemed, and were full of enthusiasms and ideals, and they spoke with that beautiful accent so common on the English stage; and he had been to New York once, and for some reason had fared pretty badly there; but he hoped to get to America again. He didn't say why, but I inferred it was because in America he could earn a decent salary, which was probably impossible in the Irish provinces.

We left them after a while, and wandered through what is left of the groves of Blarney, and visited the caves in the cliffs under the castle, at one time used for dungeons, into which the McCarthys thrust such of their enemies as they could capture. And then we explored the charming little river which runs along under the cliff, and walked on to Blarney Lake, a pretty bit of water, with more than its share of traditions: for, at a certain season of the year, a herd of white cows rises from its bosom and feeds along its banks, and it is the home of a red trout which will not rise to the fly, and it was into this lake that the last of the McCarthys cast his great chest of plate, when his castle was declared forfeited to the English, and his spirit keeps guard every night along the shore, and the secret of its whereabouts will never be revealed until a McCarthy is again Lord of Blarney.

We walked back to the entrance, at last, and had a most delicious tea on the veranda of a clean tea-shop there, with gay little stone-chatters hopping about our feet, picking up the crumbs; and then we loitered about the quaint little village, and visited the church, set in the midst of a pretty park, and wandered along a road under lofty trees, and were wholly, completely, riotously happy.

We had kissed the Blarney Stone!

CHAPTER IX

CUSHLA MA CHREE

It was very evident, as we went back to Cork, that the people who live there do not regard it as an earthly paradise, for it seemed as though the whole population of the place was out in the fields. We had seen the same thing at Dublin the Sunday before—every open space near the city crowded with men and women and children; from which I infer that the Irish have sense enough—or perhaps it is an instinct—to get out of their slums and into the fresh, clean air whenever they have a chance. And the way they lie about in the moist grass on the damp ground is another proof of the amenity of the Irish climate.

When we got back to the town, we decided we could spend an hour very pleasantly driving about and seeing the place; and, since the day was fine, we voted for an outside car. Be it known, there are two varieties of car in Cork: one the common or garden variety, the outside car, and the other a sort of anti-type called an inside car. The difference is that, in an outside car you sit on the inside, that is in the middle with your feet hanging over the wheel, while in an inside car you sit on the outside, that is over the wheel with your feet hanging down in the middle. Also the inside car has a top over it and side-curtains which can be let down in wet weather. I hope this is clear, for I do not know how to make it clearer without a dia-

gram. Both inside and outside cars are rather more ramshackle in Cork than anywhere else in Ireland.

The legal rate for a car in Cork is one shilling sixpence per hour, and I decided in advance that, come what might, come what may, I would not pay more than twice the legal rate for the use of one. So when we got off the train at the Cork terminus, I passed under review the cars standing in the street in front of it, while each individual jarvey, seeing I was interested, stood up in his seat and bellowed at the top of his voice. Finally I picked out the least disreputable one and looked the jarvey in the eye.

"We want to drive around for an hour or two," I said. "How much will you charge an hour?"

"Jump right up, sir," he cried, and wheeled his car in front of me with a flourish.

"You'll have to answer my question first."

" 'Twill be only five shillings an hour, sir."

I passed on to the next driver, who had been listening to this colloquy with absorbed interest. His price was four shillings. So I passed on to the third. His price was three shillings. I suppose if I had passed once again, the price would have been two shillings; but three shillings was within my limit, so we mounted into our places and were off.

I fear, however, that that phrase, "we were off," gives a wrong idea of our exit. We did not whirl up the street, with our horse curvetting proudly and the jarvey clinging to the reins. No, nothing like that. The horse trotted—I convinced myself of this, from time to time, by looking at him—but he was one of those up-and-down trotters, that come down in almost

exactly the same place from which they go up. The jarvey encouraged him from time to time by touching him gently with the whip, but the horse never varied his gait, except that, whenever he came to a grade, he walked. Sometimes we would catch up with a pedestrian sauntering in the same direction, and then it was quite exciting to see how we worked our way past him, inch by inch. This mode of progression had one advantage: it was not necessary to stop anywhere to examine architectural details or absorb local atmosphere. We had plenty of time to do that as we passed. In fact, in some of the slum streets, we absorbed rather more of the atmosphere than we cared for.

Cork is an ancient place, built for the most part on an island in the River Lee. St. Fin Barre started it in the seventh century by founding a monastery on the island; the Danes sailed up the river, some centuries later, and captured it; and then the Anglo-Normans took it from the Danes and managed to keep it by ceaseless vigilance. The Irish peril was so imminent, that the English had to bar the gates not only at night, but whenever they went to church or to their meals, and no stranger was suffered inside the walls until he had checked his sword and dagger and other lethal weapons with the gate-keeper.

But the Irish have always had a way with them; and what they couldn't accomplish by force of arms, they did by blarney;—or maybe it was the girls who did it! At any rate, at the end of a few generations Cork was about the Irishest town in Ireland, and levied its own taxes and made its own laws and even set up its own mint, and when the English Parliament at-

tempted to interfere, invited it to mind its own business. The climax came when that picturesque impostor, Perkin Warbeck, landed in the town, was hailed as a son of the Duke of Clarence and the rightful King of England by the mayor, and provided with new clothes and a purse of gold by the citizens, together with a force for the invasion of England. The result of which was that the mayor lost his head and the city its charter.

Cork is a tragic word in Irish ears not because of this ancient history, but because of the dreadful scenes enacted here in the wake of the great famine of 1847. It was here that thousands and thousands of famished, hopeless, half-crazed men and women said good-bye to Ireland forever and embarked for the New World. Hundreds more, unable to win farther, lay down in the streets and died, and every road leading into the town was hedged with unburied bodies. That ghastly torrent of emigration has kept up ever since, though it reached its flood some twenty years ago, and is by no means so ghastly as it was. Yet every train that comes into the town bears its quota of rough-clad people, mere boys and girls most of them, with wet eyes and set faces, and behind it, all through the west and south, it leaves a wake of sobs and wails and bitter weeping.

Cork possesses nothing of antiquarian interest. The old churches have all been swept away. The oldest one still standing dates only from 1722, and is worth a visit not because of itself, but because of some verses written about its bells by a poet who lies buried in its churchyard. St. Anne Shandon, with its tall, parti-

coloured tower surmounted by its fish-weathervane, stands on a hill to the north of the Lee. The tower contains a peal of eight bells, and it was their music which furnished inspiration for Father Prout's pleasant lines:

With deep affection and recollection
I often think of the Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would, in the days of childhood,
Fling round my cradle their magic spells.
On this I ponder where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder, sweet Cork, of thee,—
With thy bells of Shandon, that sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee.

Of course we wanted to see St. Anne Shandon and to hear the bells, so, with some difficulty, we persuaded our driver to put his horse at the ascent. The streets rising up that hill are all slums, with little lanes more slummy still ambling away in various directions; and all of them were full of people, that afternoon, who hailed our advent as an unexpected addition to the pleasures and excitements of the day, and followed along, inspecting us curiously, and commenting frankly upon the details of our attire. The impression we made was, I think, on the whole, favourable, but there is a certain novelty in hearing yourself discussed as impersonally as if you were a statue, and after the first embarrassment, we rather enjoyed it. At last we reached the church, and stopped there in the shadow of the tower until the chimes rang. They are very sweet and melodious, and fully deserve Father Prout's rhapsody.

The wife of the inspector we met at Glendalough had told Betty of a convent at Cork where girls were taught lace-making, and had given her the names of two nuns, either of whom, she was sure, would be glad to show us the school. It is in the convents that most of the lace-making in Ireland is taught nowadays, and of course we wanted to see one of the schools, so Monday morning we sallied forth in search of this one. We found it without difficulty—a great barrack of a building opening upon a court. Both nuns were there, and I do not remember ever having received anywhere a warmer welcome. Certainly we might see the lace-makers, and Sister Catherine took us in charge at once, explaining on the way that there were not as many girls at work as usual that morning, because one of their number had been married the day before, and the whole crowd had stayed up very late celebrating the great event. And then she led us into a room where about twenty girls were bending over their work.

They all arose as we entered, and then I sat down and watched them, while Sister Catherine took Betty about from one girl to the next, and explained the kind of lace each was making. Some of it was Carrickmacross, of which, it seems, there are two varieties, appliqué and guipure; and some of it was needle-point, that aristocrat of laces of which one sees so much in Belgium; and some of it was Limerick, and there were other kinds whose names I have forgotten, but all of it was beautifully done. The designing is the work of Sister Catherine, and, while I am very far from being a connoisseur, some of the pieces she afterwards showed us were very lovely indeed. Then we were asked if

we wouldn't like to hear the girls sing, and of course we said we would, so one of them, at a nod from the Sister, got to her feet and very gravely and earnestly sang John Philpot Curran's tender verses, "Cushla ma Chree," which is Irish for "Darling of My Heart":

Dear Erin, how sweetly thy green bosom rises!
An emerald set in the ring of the sea!
Each blade of thy meadows my faithful heart prizes,
Thou queen of the west! the world's cushla ma chree!

Thy gates open wide to the poor and the stranger—
There smiles hospitality hearty and free;
Thy friendship is seen in the moment of danger,
And the wanderer is welcomed with cushla ma chree.

Thy sons they are brave; but, the battle once over,
In brotherly peace with their foes they agree;
And the roseate cheeks of thy daughters discover
The soul-speaking blush that says cushla ma chree.

Then flourish forever, my dear native Erin,
While sadly I wander an exile from thee;
And, firm as thy mountains, no injury fearing,
May heaven defend its own cushla ma chree!

It is a very characteristic Irish poem of the sentimental sort, and it has been set to a soft and plaintive air also characteristically Irish, and it took on a beauty which the lines by themselves do not possess as we heard it sung that morning, with the girls, bending to their work, joining in the chorus. Then we were shown over the convent, and finally taken to the parlour, where Sister Bonaventura joined us, and where we had a very pleasant talk.

The convent's chief treasure is the great parchment volume in which its history is noted from day to day. How far back it goes I have forgotten, but I think to the very founding of the institution, and it is illuminated throughout very beautifully, while the lettering is superb. The great events in the life of every nun are recorded here, and those events are three: when she became a novice, when she took the final vows, and when she died. Those are the only events that concern the community, except that sometimes when death followed a painful and lingering illness, it was noted how cheerfully the pain was borne. Occasionally some delicate woman found the hard life more than she could endure, and then she was permitted to put aside her robes and go back into the world.

I spent half an hour looking through the book, and Sister Bonaventura showed me the record of her own entry into the convent. It was in the year in which I was born, and I shivered a little at the thought that, during all the long time I had been growing to boyhood and manhood and middle age, she had been immured here in this convent at Cork; during all the years that I had been reading and writing and talking with men and women and knocking about the world, she had been doing over and over again her little round of daily duties; but when I looked at her bright brave face and quiet eyes, and listened to her calm sweet voice, I wondered if, after all, she hadn't got farther than I!

It would be a mistake, however, to think of these nuns—or of any I ever met—as pious, strait-laced, lachrymose creatures. They were quite the reverse of

that; they were fairly bubbling over with good humour and with big-hearted blarney. Some one had given them a victrola, and it was evidently the supreme delight of their lives.

"We can't go to the opera," they said; "but the opera comes to us. We have a concert nearly every evening, and it's sorry we are when the bell rings and we have to go to bed."

They showed us their austere little chapel, after that, and introduced us to the Mother Superior, a very delicate, placid, transparent woman of more than eighty, who reminded me of the sister of Bishop Myriel; and I am sure they were sorry when we had to say goodbye.

We went down to Monkstown by rail, that afternoon, to see Queenstown harbour. The line runs close to the river, passing Passage, whose charms have been celebrated by Father Prout, and finally reaching Monkstown, on the heights above which stands the famous, four-square castle which cost its owner only fourpence. The story goes that, in 1636, John Archdeckan marched away to the war in Flanders, and his wife determined to surprise him, on his return, by presenting him with a stately castle. So she gathered a great number of builders together and gave them the job on the condition that they would buy all their food and drink and clothing from her. When the castle was done, she balanced her accounts and found that she had expended fourpence more than she had received.

At Monkstown, we took a boat and ferried across the harbour, past many grey men-of-war which lay at

anchor there. Very beautiful it is, with the high, green-clad hills pressing about it on all sides, and shrouding the entrance so completely that one might fancy oneself in a landlocked lake. Queenstown is built on the side of one of these hills, and is dominated by the great, white cathedral, which has been building for fifty years, and is not yet finished.

It is a curious coincidence that the two ports of Ireland by which most visitors enter and leave it should be named after two people whom the Irish have little reason to love. In 1821, when George IV embarked at the port of Dunleary, just below Dublin, he "graciously gave permission" that its name might be changed to Kingstown in honour of the event. In 1849, Queen Victoria paid one of her very few visits to Ireland, and sailed into the Cove of Cork. As she herself wrote, "To give the people the satisfaction of calling the place Queenstown, in honour of its being the first spot on which I set foot on Irish ground, I stepped on shore amidst the roar of cannon and the enthusiastic shouts of the people." Forty years later, when the Irish had come to realise that the Queen had no interest in them, they had the dignity and good sense to put aside the servility to which they have sometimes been too prone, and to refuse to take part in the celebration of her Jubilee. But Queenstown is still Queenstown.

The town consists of a single long street of public houses and emigrant hotels and steamship offices facing the water, and some steep lanes running back up over the hill, and the day we were there, it was crowded with emigrants, Swedes and Norwegians mostly, who

had been brought ashore from the stranded *Haverford*, and who spent their time wandering aimlessly up and down, trying to find out what was going to happen to them. There were many sailors and marines knocking about the grog-shops, as well as the crowd of navvies and longshoremen always to be found lounging about a water-front. This water-front is one great landing-stage, and it is here that perhaps a million Irish men and women have stepped forever off of Irish soil.

We climbed up the hill presently to the cathedral, which owes not a little of its impressiveness to its superb site. Its exterior is handsome and imposing—good Gothic, though perhaps a trifle too florid for the purest taste; but the effect of the interior is ruined by the absurd columns of the nave, made of dark marble, and so slender that the heavy structure of white stone above them seems to be hanging in the air.

We had hoped to go by rail to Youghal and take steamer up the Blackwater to Cappoquin, and from there drive over to the Trappist monastery at Mt. Melleray; but we found that the steamer did not start until the fifteenth of June, so most regretfully that excursion had to be abandoned. Those who have made it tell me it is a very beautiful one. Cloyne is also perhaps worth visiting; but we were tired of Cork and hungering for Killarney, and so decided to turn our faces westward next day.

CHAPTER X

THE SHRINE OF ST. FIN BARRE

THERE are two ways of getting from Cork to Killarney, one by the so-called "Prince of Wales Route," because the late King Edward went that way in 1858, and the other by way of Macroom. Both routes converge at Glengarriff and are identical beyond that, and as the best scenery along the route is between Glengarriff and Killarney, I don't think it really matters much which route is chosen. The "Prince of Wales Route" is by rail to Bantry, and then either by boat or coach to Glengarriff, which is only a few miles away. The other route is to Macroom by rail, and from there there is a very fine ride by coach of nearly forty miles to Glengarriff. We chose the Macroom route because of the longer coach ride and because it touches Gougane Barra, the famous retreat of St. Fin Barre. I think, on the whole, it is the more picturesque of the two routes; but either is vastly preferable to the all-rail route. Indeed, the visitor to Killarney who misses the run from Glengarriff, misses some of the most beautiful and impressive scenery in all Ireland.

It was shortly after nine o'clock that our train pulled out of the station at Cork, and at first the line ran between small, well-tilled fields, each with its cosy cottage. The whole country-side had an air of content

and passable well-being; every wall was gay with the yellow gorse, and in the fields the green of potato and turnip was just beginning to show above the dark earth of the ridges in which they were planted. These ridged fields, which we were to see so often afterwards in the west of Ireland, tell of a ground so soaked with moisture that it must be carefully and thoroughly drained before anything will grow in it. The ridges, which run with the slope of the land, are usually about eighteen inches wide, and are separated by ditches a foot wide and a foot deep to carry off the excess moisture. There is always a trickle of water at the bottom of these ditches, and the task of keeping them open and free from weeds is a never-ending one.

Presently on a high rock away to the left, appeared the tower which is all that is left of the old stronghold of the Barretts, and farther on are the green-clad ruins of Kilcrea Abbey, and near by is another great keep marking an old castle of the McCarthys. And then the train skirts the wild bog of Kilcrea, and then there are more ruins, and still more; and at last the train stops at its terminus, Macroom.

The motor-coach was awaiting us, and we were relieved to find that, so far from being crowded, there was only one other couple, Americans like ourselves, to make the trip. The season had opened only the day before, and, after we got started, the driver confided to us that this was the first time he had ever been over the road. Even if he hadn't told us, we should soon have had every reason to suspect it.

The road follows the valley of the Lee, which is not here the single clear and shining stream which we saw

above Cork, but is broken into a score of channels between islands covered with low-growing brush—a sort of morass, of a strange and weird appearance. Here and there an ivied ruin towers above the trees, for this was the country of the O'Learys and these are the strongholds they built to defend it against the aggressions of their neighbours; and then we rattled down the street of a little village, and the driver brought the coach to a stop before the door of an inn, told us that this was Inchigeelagh and that there would be ten minutes for refreshments, and then disappeared in the direction of the bar.

I suppose he got his refreshments for nothing, as a reward for stopping there. At least I can think of no other reason for stopping, since Inchigeelagh is only half an hour from Macroom, unless it was to give the nerves of the passengers a chance to quiet down a little. For we had already begun to realise that our driver was a speed-maniac. He had struck a hair-raising gait from the start, had sent the lumbering bus down grades and around turns at a rate that was decidedly disconcerting, and while there had been no especial danger except to the people we met—for the road was bordered by high earthen walls—the rattle and jar of the solid tires had been enough to make the teeth chatter.

So we were glad when the racket stopped, and we could get down and stroll about a little; and we soon found that Inchigeelagh is a very quaint village. We walked down to the bridge over the Lee, and looked at Lough Allua stretching away to the west; and then we stopped at a tumbledown cottage to talk to an old woman who was leaning over her half-door; and she

invited us in and asked us to sit down. It was my first glimpse of the interior of an Irish cottage of the poorer class, and it opened my eyes to the cruel lot of the people—and there are many, many thousands of them—who are compelled to live in such surroundings.

There was just one room, perhaps eight feet by fifteen, lighted by two little windows about eighteen inches square, one on either side the door. The doorway was just high enough to enter without stooping, and ran from the ground right up to the eaves. The floor was of clay, and the walls inside had been daubed with mud to fill up the cracks and then whitewashed, but the damp had flaked the whitewash off in great leprous-looking blotches. The ceiling was formed by some rough boards laid on top of the joists overhead, so low that one feared to stand upright, and I suppose the dark space under the thatch was used as a sleeping-room, for there was a ladder leading to it, and I saw nothing in the room below which looked like a bed. There may have been a bed there, however, which, being new to rural Ireland, I did not recognise as such.

At one end of the room was an open fireplace in which a few blocks of turf smoked and flared, with that pungent odour which we had already come to like, but which, at such close quarters, was a little overpowering. A black and battered pot hung on a crane above the fire, and some sort of mess was bubbling in it—potatoes I suppose. There was a rude table, and two or three chairs, and all sorts of rags and debris hung against the walls and piled in the corners, and a few dishes in a rough home-made dresser, and an old brush-broom, and some boxes and a lot of other in-

describable trash. Three or four bedraggled chickens were wandering in and out, and I glanced around for the pig. But there was no pig—this family was far too poor to own one.

It seemed impossible that a human being could live for any length of time in a place so bare of comfort, and I looked at the old woman, who had sat down across from us, and wondered how she managed to survive. I suspect she was not half so old as her wrinkled face and sunken eyes and shrivelled hands indicated. She lived there with her husband, she said, and had for many years. He was a labourer, and, in good times, could earn ten shillings a week; but most of the time it was impossible to find any work at all. She had no relatives in America to turn to, and neither she nor her husband was old enough to get a pension, so that it was a hard struggle to keep out of the workhouse. But they *had* kept out thus far, glory be to God, though the struggle was growing harder every year, for they were getting older and their rheumatism was getting worse, and neither of them could work as they once could.

All this was said quite simply, in a manner not complaining, but resigned, as if accepting the inevitable. Her philosophy of life seemed to be that, since Fate had chosen to set herself and her husband in the midst of circumstances so hard, there was nothing to do but struggle on as long as possible, with the certainty of coming to the workhouse in the end. No doubt they would be far more comfortable in the workhouse than they had ever been outside of it, and yet they had that horror of it which is common to all Irish men and

women. The horror, I think, is not so much at the abstract idea of receiving charity as at the public stigma which the workhouse gives. The Irish have been eager enough to draw their old age pensions, and many of them, who shrink from the workhouse as from a foul disgrace, do not hesitate to beg a few pennies from the passing stranger.

The old woman at Inchigeelagh, however, did not beg, nor intimate in any way that she desired or expected money, but she did not refuse the coin I slipped into her hand, after I had taken the picture of her and of her cottage, which you will find opposite this page. Perhaps she would have liked to do so, but the little coin represented a measure of potatoes or of turnips, and so a little less hunger, a little more strength. How many of us, I wonder, would be too proud to beg if we could find no work to do, and our backs were bare and our stomachs empty?

The tooting of the horn warned us that our bus was ready to go on again, and we were soon skirting the shore of Lough Allua, with picturesque mountains closing in ahead. And then our driver crossed the bridge over the Lee, and made a wrong turning, and didn't know it until somebody shouted at him and set him right; and this small misadventure seemed completely to wreck his self-control, so that, when he got back to the main road, he rushed along in a manner more terrifying than ever. The fearful racket heralded our approach, else there must have been more than one bad accident; and I can yet see wild-eyed men leaping from their seats and springing frantically to their horses' heads, while the white-faced women seated

A COTTAGE AT INCHIGEELAGH

THE SHRINE OF ST. FIN BARRE

in the carts peered out at us under their shawls as we brushed past, and no doubt sent a malediction after us. Geese, chickens and pigs scurried wildly in every direction, and that we did not leave the road strewn with their dead bodies was little less than a miracle. The road ran between high hedges, so that we could see only a little way ahead, and we got to watching the curves with a sort of fascination, for it seemed certain that we *must* run into something at the next one.

We had been mounting gradually all this time, often up gradients so steep that they kept the driver busy with his gears, and the view had gradually widened and grown in impressiveness. Then we turned off a narrow road at the right, and I thought for a moment our driver had gone wrong again.

"We're going to Gougane Barra," he explained, seeing my look, for I sat on the seat beside him, and in a few minutes we were skirting a narrow lough, hemmed in, on the north, by a range of precipitous mountains, with gullied sides patched with grey granite and dark heather, as bare and desolate as a mountain could be.

There is an inn by the lake shore, and the bus stopped in front of it. The driver showed us with a gesture the little island containing the shrine of St. Fin Barre, and then hastened away into the inn. We four started for the island, and presently we heard heavy steps behind us, and an animated scarecrow armed with a big stick came running up and shouted something in an incomprehensible tongue, and waved the stick above his head, and proceeded to lead the way. He was evidently the guide, so we followed him along the border of the lake, and across the narrow strip of

land which now connects the island with the shore, and all the time our guide was talking in the most earnest way, but not a word could any of us understand. It sounded remotely like English, and he evidently understood English, for when we asked him to repeat some particularly emphatic bit, he would do so with added emphasis, but quite in vain. I shall never forget how earnestly he would look in our faces, raising his voice as though we were deaf, and pointing with his stick, and gesturing with his other hand, in the effort to make us understand.

We persuaded him to go and sit down, after awhile, and then we had a chance really to look about us. There is something indescribably savage and threatening about that dark sheet of water, shadowed by gloomy cliffs, bare of vegetation, and torn into deep gullies by the cataracts which leap down them. Through the hills to the east, the water from the lake has carved itself a narrow outlet, and the stream which rushes away through this gorge is the beginning of the River Lee. No place so grand and desolate would be without its legend, and this is Gougane Barra's:

When the blessed Saint Patrick gathered together all the snakes in Ireland and drove them over the mountains and into the western sea, there was one hideous monster which he overlooked, so well had it concealed itself in this mountain-circled tarn. It was a winged dragon, and it kept very quiet until the Saint was dead, for fear of what might happen; but, once Patrick was gathered to his fathers, the dragon fancied it might do as it pleased. So it issued forth, all the more savage for its years of retirement, and started to

lay waste the country. The frightened people appealed to their saints to help them, and among those who put up prayers was a holy man named Fineen Barre, who had a hermitage on an island in the lake, and so knew the dragon well. And the saints in heaven looked down and saw the distress of the poor people and pitied them, and they told Fineen Barre that they would give him power to slay the dragon on one condition, and that condition was that he should build a church on the spot where the waters of the lake met the tide of the sea.

Fineen accepted the condition gladly, and went out and met the monster and slew it and threw its body into the lake, and its black blood darkens the water to this day. And when that was done, he set off down the river, and at the spot where its waters met the tide, he built his church, and the city of Cork grew up about it. And then in place of the church, he built a great cathedral, and when he died his body was placed in a silver coffin and buried before its high altar. Then the city was plundered by the Danes, who dug up the coffin and carried it away, and what became of the Saint's bones no one knows.

But the little island where he first lived has been a holy place from that day to this, and on the anniversary of his death, which comes in September, crowds of pilgrims journey here to say their prayers before the thirteen stations set apart by tradition, and to bless themselves with water from the Saint's well.

The well is just at the entrance to the island, and its water is supposed to possess miraculous power. Our voluble but ununderstandable guide invited us by ur-

gent gestures to test its efficacy, but the water looked scummy and dirty, and we declined. A few steps farther on is a small, stone-roofed chapel, built in the likeness of Cormac's chapel on the Rock of Cashel, and in it services are held during the days of pilgrimage to the shrine. There are also some remains of an old chapel, supposed to have been Saint Fin Barre's own; but by far the most interesting thing on the island is the stone enclosure within which the pilgrims say their prayers.

The enclosure, which is surrounded by a heavy wall of stones laid loosely on each other, after the ancient Irish fashion, is about thirty feet square, and its level is some feet below that of the ground outside, so that one goes down into it by a short flight of steps. In the centre of the enclosure a plain wooden cross stands on a platform of five steps. On the flagstone at its foot is an inscription telling in detail how the "rounds" are to be performed on the vigil and forenoon of St. Fin Barre's feast-day. In the enclosing wall, which is fourteen feet thick in places, under heavy arches, are eight cells, which may be used as places of retreat by those undergoing penance. The Stations of the Cross are set in the upper portion of the wall, but are ugly modern plaster-casts. I took a picture of the place, which will be found opposite page 144, and which gives a fairly good idea of it.

In the middle of a scrubby grove, a little way from the enclosure, is a wishing-stone, which had evidently been much used, I hope to good purpose, for the stone itself was covered with trinkets and the bushes round about were hung thickly with rags and hairpins and

rosaries and other tokens. I picked up somewhere, perhaps from the jargon of the guide, that this wishing-stone is the altar of Fin Barre's old chapel, but I haven't been able to verify this, and it may not be so; but the game is to put up a prayer to the Saint, and make your wish, and leave some token to show you are in earnest, and the wish will surely come true. Of course we made a wish and added some half-pennies to the collection on the altar. In turning over the trinkets already deposited there, we were amused to find two bright Lincoln cents.

On the shore just opposite the island is a little cemetery held in great repute because of the holy men who are buried there. For the island has been the home of a succession of hermits from the time St. Fin Barre left it to build his church at Cork, and there are many legends of their saintly lives and wonderful deeds. When they died, they were buried in the cemetery, where there is also a cross to the memory of Jeremiah Callanan, a poet native to the neighbourhood, who celebrated the shrine in some pretty verses beginning:

There is a green island in lone Gougane Barra,
Where Allua of songs rushes forth as an arrow;
In deep-valleyed Desmond—a thousand wild fountains
Come down to that lake, from their home in the mountains.

But the wild honking of the horn told us it was time to go; our guide realised this, too, and was back at our heels more voluble and inarticulate than ever; not too inarticulate, however, to sell a knobby shillelagh to our companions and to accept with thanks the pennies I dropped into his hand. He tried to stay, hat in hand,

until we departed, but the strain was too much for him, and after a moment he made off for the bar of the inn.

Our chauffeur was evidently vexed that we had lingered so long at the shrine of the Saint, for he hurtled us down the rough by-road at a great rate, whirled into the smoother highway on two wheels, and then opened his throttle wide and pushed up his spark and let her rip. The road mounted steadily, with the view to the south opening more and more, and a rugged range of hills ahead coming closer and closer, until they lay flung right across the road, and then we swept around a sharp turn and entered the Pass of Keimaneigh.

The guide-books assert that no pass in Europe exceeds it in grandeur, but this is a gross exaggeration—it is not nearly so fine, for instance, as the Pass of Llanberis; and yet it is wild and savage and very beautiful—a deep gorge cut right through the mountains by a glacier, which has left the marks of its passage on the rocks on either side. There is just room between the craggy precipices for a narrow road and the rugged channel of the rushing stream which drains the mountains. The pass is most picturesque near its eastern end, for there the cliffs are steepest, and the overhanging crags assume their most fantastic shapes. In every nook and cranny of the rocks ferns and heather and wild-flowers have found a foothold, the feathery plumes of London-pride being especially noticeable. Here in Ireland it is called St. Patrick's Cabbage, and no doubt there is a legend connecting the Saint with it, but I have never happened to run across it.

As we plunged deeper into the pass, the walls on

either side closed in more and more, great boulders dislodged from the heights above crowded the road so closely that more than once it was forced to turn aside to avoid them; the greenery of fern and colour of flower gave place to the sober hue of the heather and the dark green of the bog-myrtle; and then we were suddenly conscious that the stream by the roadside, which had been flowing back toward Cork, was flowing forward toward Bantry Bay, and we knew that we had reached the summit of the watershed dividing east from west. And then the hills fell back, and there, far below us, stretched a great rugged valley, with a tiny river wandering through, and white threads of roads curving here and there, and Lilliputian houses scattered among the fields.

The car paused for an instant on the edge of this abyss and then plunged into it. At least, that was the sensation it gave its passengers. I do not know that I have ever travelled a steeper road, or one which wound more threateningly near the unguarded edges of precipices—certainly not in a heavy motor-bus hurtling along at thirty miles an hour. Perhaps the brakes were not holding, or perhaps the driver had had a drink too much; at any rate, we bounced from rock to rock and spun around sharp turns, only a foot or two from the edge of the road, which there was absolutely nothing to guard and which dropped sheer for hundreds of feet. But at last the more hair-raising of these turns were left behind, the road straightened out along the side of the hill, and then, far ahead, we saw opening out below us the blue waters and craggy shores of Bantry Bay.

Down and down we dropped, with new vistas opening every minute, until we were running close beside the border of the bay, and for ten miles we followed its convolutions. Then we swung away between high hedges, and Betty nearly fell out of the bus—for the hedges were of fuchsias, ten feet high and heavy with scarlet flowers!

That was the crowning delight of that wonderful drive. We ran between high rows of fuchsias for perhaps half a mile; then we turned through a gate into beautiful grounds; and a moment later we were climbing out in front of the hotel at Glengarriff—half an hour ahead of schedule time!

CHAPTER XI

A TRIP THROUGH WONDERLAND

You may well believe that, with such variegated loveliness all about us, we did not linger in the hotel a moment longer than was necessary, but made a hasty tea and sallied forth to explore the neighbourhood. First of all, Betty must pick some fuchsias, so we went back to the road, and climbed over a wall into a field surrounded by high hedges of the gorgeous flower. It was a new experience for Betty to reach up overhead and break off great branches which were simply masses of scarlet bells, until she had her arms full, and I suspect she went a little wobbly over it; but she was to have the same experience many times thereafter, for the fuchsia grows in great profusion throughout southern and western Ireland.

I saw but one variety, however, the flower of which has a dark blue trumpet and scarlet bell, but this is perhaps the most showy of all, and nothing could be more gorgeous than a hedge in full bloom. In the woods, or in gardens where they are left untrimmed, the bushes will grow into veritable trees, twenty-five or thirty feet high.

We went back to the hotel, when Betty had gathered all she could carry, and she sent the flowers up to our room by a maid who laughed sympathetically—I fancy she had seen such attacks of madness more than once before—and then we started along a winding path

which led through the woods down to the shore of the bay. And we soon found that fuchsias were not the only things which grow to giant proportions here, for the path was hedged with ferns four or five feet high—great, lordly fellows, standing stiffly upright as though on parade. Ferns were everywhere, even on the trees overhead, for the trees are padded with moss, and in this the ferns have found a foothold. And there were holly trees still scarlet with last year's berries, and hawthorn fragrant with bloom; and over everything the English ivy ran riot—rather in the same fashion, I thought as I looked at it, in which England herself has run riot over Ireland.

We got down to the shore of the bay, at last, and I quite agree with Thackeray that it is a world's wonder, with its rock-strewn shore and emerald islands and pellucid water, framed in, all about, by rugged mountains. We wandered along its edge, gay with sea-pinks, for an hour or more, and then spent another hour loitering in the woods, and finally walked on, between the flaming hedges and fern-draped trees, to the little village, which we could smell, long before we came to it, by the tang of peat-smoke in the air. It is a mere huddle of low, thatched houses, and I judge that, even amid these gorgeous surroundings, life can be as hard and sordid as anywhere in Ireland.

A little distance from the village was a pretty, two-storied villa, covered with roses and climbing vines, and with a large garden beside it, blazing with a great variety of gorgeous bloom. We stopped to look at it over the gate, and the gardener espied us and came hurrying forward to ask us in to see the flowers. And

one of the plants he showed us most proudly was a single, sickly-looking stalk of Indian corn, about a foot high, growing in a pot. When we told him that, in the state we came from, Indian corn filled thousands and thousands of acres every summer, and grew from eight to ten feet high, he looked as though he scarcely believed us. But that little stalk of corn brought home to me, as perhaps nothing else could have done, the fact that my own particular corner of the earth is divinely favoured, too, in ways unknown even to Glengarriff.

I had a most improving conversation, that night, in the smoking-room of the hotel, with a Catholic priest and a salesman for the British Petroleum Company. The priest, who must have been at least sixty-five, had the typical long, thin Irish face, and was intensely Nationalist. The salesman was younger and rather rubicund, and I judge that he was an Englishman and a Unionist. It was the priest who did most of the talking about Home Rule, after I got him started, and he protested earnestly that Ulster's fears of unfair treatment were utterly unfounded. The Catholics, he said, didn't want supremacy; all they wanted was equality, but they *did* want that, and felt they were entitled to it. England, he admitted, had made great strides within the past ten years toward atoning for her old injustice to Ireland, and was evidently trying hard to do what was right.

"Yes," broke in the salesman; "she's going altogether too far. What with old age pensions and the purchase act and poor relief and railway building and

putting up labourers' houses and what not, she's spending twice as much on this country as she gets out of it. It won't do; it has got to stop."

"I don't believe England spends more on Ireland than she gets out of us," said the priest quickly.

"Here it is in black and white," and the other triumphantly slapped the paper he had been reading. "Imperial expenditures for Ireland, 1912-13, £12,381,500; received from Ireland, £10,850,000; deficit, £1,531,500—that would be about seven and a half million dollars," he added, for my benefit. "Over a million and a half pounds sterling that England has made Ireland a present of in the past year! What do you think of that?" and he turned back to the priest.

"The figures may be true," said the latter, slowly, "and then again they may not. I have been told that England burdens Ireland with many expenditures which don't belong to us. But in any event, I agree with you that charity does us no good—it does us harm. We don't want charity."

"Hm-m-m!" grunted the salesman sceptically.

"I'll admit," went on the other, "that there are and always have been many Irishmen only too eager to take alms—more shame to them. There have always been many ready to sell themselves for a good position under government, and to sell their country too, if need be. We have our share of patriots, but we have more than our share of traitors, I sometimes think. But it isn't by them the country should be judged. What true Irishmen want is the right to stand alone like men and fight their own battles, and in fighting them, the north and south will forget their foolish

quarrel and become friends again as they should be. They aren't half as far apart, even now, as some would have you believe. Most of this talk about Ulster is the black work of men who make their living out of it, who care nothing for Ireland, and take advantage of every little by-election to stir the fire and keep the pot bubbling."

I remarked that this ceaseless agitation over elections was unknown in America, where all the elections were held on one day, after which there were no more elections for a year.

The priest stared at me in astonishment.

"Did I understand you to say," he asked, "that the elections all over your country are held on the same day?"

"Yes," I said; "on a day early in November, fixed by law."

"I don't see how you manage it."

"It isn't hard to manage—it's really very simple."

"But where do you get enough police?"

"Enough police?"

"Yes. Here in Ireland, when we have an election, we have to send in the police from all the country round to keep the peace. If we tried to have all our elections on one day, there would be riots everywhere."

"What about?" I asked.

"I don't know—the people wouldn't know themselves, most likely; but there's many of them would welcome the chance for a shindy, if the police wasn't there. Isn't it the same in America?"

I told him I had been an election officer many times, but had never seen any serious disorder at the polls.

"Aren't there many riots next day?" he asked.

"Why," I said, "the day after election is the quietest day in the year. Everybody goes to work as though nothing had happened."

"I don't think there is much danger of riots," put in the salesman, "but we couldn't have your system over here because with us a man has a right to vote wherever he owns property and pays taxes, and if all the elections were held on one day, he couldn't get around."

"Ah, yes," nodded the priest; "I did not think of that. How do you manage it in America?"

"With us," I explained, "every man has one vote and no more."

Again his eyes goggled.

"Would you be telling me," he gasped, "that your millionaires, your men of vast properties, have no more votes than the poor man?"

And when I told him that was so, I think he was by way of pitying our millionaires, as men deprived of their just rights—as, perhaps, in some respects, they are.

And then the salesman told me that he had been to America, as far west as Kansas, where he had visited some friends. He had gone over, he said, with that sort of good-natured contempt for everything American so common in England, but he had come away convinced that there was no country on earth to match it.

"The only thing I saw to criticise in America were the roads," he added. "Why don't you take a leaf from Lloyd George's book? He has put a tax of three-pence a gallon on gasoline used by pleasure cars,

and this tax goes into a fund for the upkeep of the highways, proportioned according to the number of cars in each county. Gasoline used in commercial cars pays a tax of three-ha'-pence a gallon. A great sum is collected in this way, and the upkeep of the highways is thrown upon the people who do them the most damage. If you'd do the same in America, your roads would soon be as good as ours; and nobody could complain that the tax was unjust."

I agreed that it was a clever idea, and I hereby call it to the attention of our lawmakers.

"Well," said the priest, who had been listening attentively to all this, "I am glad to know the truth about this tax. I had heard of it, and had thought it another English exaction laid upon Ireland. Now I see that I was wrong; for, as you say, it is a just tax."

And then he told us some stories of the old days, of famine and persecution and eviction, of the hard fight for life on the rocky hillsides, while the fertile valleys were given over to grazing or ringed with high walls and turned into game preserves. There were lighter stories, too, of the humorous side of Irish character, and one of them, though I suspect it is an old one, I will set down here.

The southwest coast of Ireland, of which Bantry Bay forms a part, is one of the most dangerous in the world, because of the rugged capes which stretch far out into the ocean and the small islands and hidden reefs which lie beyond. It is just the sort of coast where fish abound, and so little villages are scattered all along it, whose men-folks fish whenever the weather lets them, and at other times labour in the tiny potato

patches up on the rocky hillsides. Naturally they are familiar with all the twists and turnings of the coast, and are always on the lookout to add to their scanty incomes by a job of piloting.

One day the crew of a fishing-boat perceived a big freighter nosing about in a light fog, rather closer inshore than she should have been, and at once lay alongside and put a man aboard.

"Will you be wantin' a pilot, sir?" he asked the captain, who was anxiously pacing the bridge.

The captain stared a moment at the dirty and tattered visitor.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded, at last.

"Me name's McCarthy, sir. I'm a pilot, sir."

"A pilot!" and the captain looked at McCarthy again. "I don't believe it."

"'Tis the truth I'm tellin' you, sir," protested McCarthy.

"Well," said the captain, "if it's the truth, you can easily prove it. Let me hear you box the compass."

McCarthy was nonplussed. More than once, sitting over a pot of ale in some public house, he had heard old sailors proudly rattle off the points of the compass, but, though he remembered how the rigmarole sounded, he had no idea how to do it, nor even any very clear idea of what it meant.

"Faith, I can't do it, sir," he admitted.

"Can't do it?" roared the captain. "Can't box the compass! And yet you call yourself a pilot."

McCarthy did some rapid thinking, for he saw a good job, which he could ill afford to lose, slipping through his fingers.

"It's like this, sir," he said, finally, "in our small place, it's the Irish we would be using, niver a word of English, and all the English any of us knows is just the little we might pick up from bein' after the ships. I can't box the compass in English, but I can box it in the Irish, sir, if that will do."

The captain looked into the speaker's guileless eyes and also did some rapid thinking. He knew no Gaelic, but he needed a pilot badly, and he reflected that, in any language, it ought to be possible to tell whether the compass was being boxed correctly, because the words would have to follow each other with a certain similarity of sound, as north, north-and-by-east, north-north-east, north-east-by-north, and so on.

"All right," he growled, "go ahead and let's hear you."

"My father," McCarthy began solemnly in his homely Gaelic; "my grandfather, my grandfather's grandmother, my grandmother's grandfather, my great grandfather, my great grandfather's grandmother, my great grandmother's great . . ."

"Hold on," shouted the captain, quite convinced. "I see you know how. Take charge of the ship!"

And McCarthy thereupon proved he knew how by getting the vessel safely past Cape Clear!

It was pouring rain, next morning, a steady, driving rain, which looked as though it might last forever, and we were confronted by the problem which so often confronts the traveller in Ireland, whether to go or stay. To go meant the possibility of having the most beautiful drive in Ireland obscured in mist; to stay

meant a dreary day at the hotel, with no assurance that the next day would be any better, or the next, or the next. At last we decided to go.

Never after that was the problem so difficult, for we soon realised the folly of permitting Irish rain to interfere with any plan. In the first place, the rain is not an unmixed evil, for it is soft and fresh and vivifying, and it adds mystery and picturesqueness to the most commonplace landscape; and in the second place, it is very fickle, begins unaccountably, stops unexpectedly, and rarely lasts the day through. In fact, the crest of any ridge may take one into it, or out of it, as we were to find that day.

So when, about ten o'clock, the bus came puffing up to the door, we climbed aboard. The road, for a little way, wound up the valley of the Glengarriff River, and then, striking off into the mountains, climbed upward at a gradient that tested the power of the engine. Almost at once we were in the mountain mist, soft and grey, eddying all about us, whirling aside for an instant now and then to give us tantalising glimpses down into the valleys, and then closing in again. Up and up we went, a thousand feet and more, and at last we came to the crest of the mountain range which divides County Cork from County Kerry. The road plunges under the crest through a long tunnel, and then winds steeply down into the valley of the Sheen.

Again there was a series of sharp and unprotected turns, just as on the day before, and this time with the added complication of a slippery, sloppy road; but I have never ridden with a more careful or more accomplished driver than we had that day, and he nursed

the heavy bus along so quietly and with such easy mastery that no one thought of danger. Gradually the mist lightened and cleared away, until we could see the wide valley far below, with the tiny winding river at the bottom, and the walled fields and midget houses. There was a succession of such valleys all the way to Kenmare, and we finally rolled up before the big hotel there just in time for lunch.

We walked down into the village, afterwards, and found it more bustling and prosperous than any of the other small villages we had seen. This is due partly perhaps to the tourist traffic, for Kenmare is a famous bathing and fishing resort; but homespun tweeds are manufactured there in considerable quantities, and at the convent scores of girls are employed at lace-making, Celtic embroidery, wood-carving and leather-work. The school is said to be one of the best managed in Ireland, and I was sorry that we did not have time to visit it. We saw, however, some of the Kerry girls in the street, and they were fully handsome enough to give colour to the doggerel:

> 'Tis sure that the lads will be goin' to Cork
> When their money is gone and they're wantin' to work;
> But 'tis just as sure that they'll turn back to Kerry
> For a purty colleen when they're wantin' to marry.

Kerry is a poor country and always will be, for it consists mostly of stony hills, and though it is renowned for its scenery, no one except the hotel keepers can live on that. Such little hill farms as have been wrested from the rocks produce but scantily; so when there is a "long family," as the Irish put it —and "long fami-

lies" are the rule—one son will stay at home to look after the old people, and the others will fare forth into the world to search for a living. I hope it is true that they come back when they're searching for wives. Otherwise the lot of the Kerry girls, hard enough under any circumstances, would be harder still. Nowhere in Ireland are there brighter eyes or redder cheeks.

The rain was quite over by the time we were ready to start again, and the mist had disappeared under the rays of the sun, so that we had the benefit of the full beauty of the Kenmare River, which is really a wide bay, as we ran close along its western bank. Then the road doubled back from it, and presently the driver stopped at a spot where a narrow footpath struck down into the woods, and advised us to take it, saying that he would wait for us at its other end. In a moment we found ourselves clambering down the side of a wildly-beautiful ravine, with the roar of rushing water rising from below, and trees festooned with ferns and ivy meeting above our heads. And then, high above us, we saw the arch of a stone bridge; and quite suddenly we came out upon the stream, the Blackwater, foaming over the rocks. It was at its very best, from the heavy rain of the morning, and we stood there watching it, fascinated by its beauty, as long as we dared.

We went on again close beside the shore of the bay, and in half an hour came to Parknasilla, where there is another big hotel, set in the midst of beautiful grounds, and with superb views opening on every side. The climate here is sub-tropical, and the vegetation

THE BAY AT GLENGARRIFF

THE UPPER LAKE, KILLARNEY, FROM THE KENMARE ROAD

mounts to a climax of riotous profusion, with palms and calla lilies growing in the open. The bay, too, is very fine, with bluff, rock-strewn shores, and innumerable green islets speckling its sparkling waters, and rugged mountains closing in the distance.

Then again we were off, mounting steadily, steadily, winding under beetling crags and above grey precipices; up and up, with the world sinking away into the valley at our left, and the heathery, rock-strewn heights soaring upward at our right; and finally, at our feet, opened the wonderful panorama of the Brown Valley —brown bog, brown rock, brown heather, mounting to the distant slopes of Macgillicuddy's Reeks. We dropped down toward it, mile after mile; then up and up again, to the crest of the ridge beyond—and there, far below us, lay the lakes of Killarney, rimmed with green hills and dotted with green islands—the most sweetly beautiful in all the world.

The loveliest general view of the lakes of Killarney to be had from anywhere is as one drops down toward them along the Kenmare road. Their individual beauties may, of course, be seen to better advantage closer at hand; but from this height, the whole wonderful panorama stretches before one. Right across the valley opens the Gap of Dunloe, with the rugged Reeks on one side and the green clad Purple Mountain on the other; below is the narrow, island-dotted, hill-encircled upper lake; farther away is Muckross Lake, and far in the distance stretch the blue waters of Lough Leane, the largest of them all. My advice is to take a long look at it, for you will never see anything more lovely.

The road soon dropped among the trees, and our driver pointed out with evident pride the Queen's cottage on the shore of the upper lake, built a good many years ago in order that Victoria, on her tour of the lakes, might have a fitting place in which to lunch, and which has never been occupied since. Then the road ran close beside the border of the middle lake, plunged again into the woods for a mile or two; and at last the bus stopped before the inn where we intended to stay, and we climbed down regretfully.

The inn was a long, two-storied building, standing a little back from the road, and the porter who came running out to take our bags, might have stepped straight out of Pickwick, he was so fat, so jolly, and so rubicund. I had some films I wanted developed at once, because I was afraid the damp weather would affect them, and I asked him where I could get it done.

"There's a man just this side of the village can do it, sir," he said. "You will see his sign as you go along the road."

"How far is it?" I asked.

"The village is two mile, sir."

"Then it's less than two miles?"

"It is, sir."

I turned to Betty.

"We've got plenty of time before dinner," I said. "Suppose we walk in and see the town."

And Betty, wotting little of what was before her, consented.

I put my films in my pocket, and we set off eagerly along the pleasant road, past a little village, past a church with a graveyard back of it and a Celtic cross

high on the hillside above it, past a hotel or two, around one turn after another, with green-clad hills mounting steeply to our right and the blue lake lying low on our left. We met an occasional cyclist, or a donkey-cart being driven home from market, or a labourer trudging stolidly home from work, or two or three girls strolling along with arms interlaced, exchanging confidences. And the air was very sweet and the evening very cool and pleasant, and the sky full of glorious colour—

"We must certainly have come two miles," said Betty. "What do you suppose is the matter?"

"I don't know," I said, looking at my watch and noting that we had been half an hour on the road. "Perhaps we'll see the town around the next turn."

But we didn't. All we saw was about half a mile of empty road. We covered this and came to another turn, and there before us lay another long stretch of road. Determined not to give up, we pushed on, and came to a bridge over a rippling little stream, which we learned afterward was the Flesk, and we stopped and looked at it awhile and rested.

"We must be nearly there," I said encouragingly.

"What's bothering me," explained Betty, "isn't the distance we have to go to get there; it's the distance we have to go to get back."

There was another bend in the road just beyond the bridge, and we turned this, confident that the village would be there. But it wasn't. We saw nothing but the smooth highway, stretching away and away into the dim distance. I looked at my watch again.

"We've been walking nearly an hour," I said. "It looks as though we might miss dinner, after all."

And just then there came the trot of a horse and the jingle of harness along the road behind us, and a side-car drew up with a flourish.

"Would your honour be wantin' a car?" asked the jarvey, leaning toward us ingratiatingly.

"We were told there was a photographer's just this side of the village. Do you know where it is?"

"I do, your honour."

"How far is it?"

"'Tis just over there beyont. If you will step up on the car, I'll have ye there in a minute. I'm goin' right past it."

Of course we got up. And, as the jarvey had said, the photographer's shop was just around the next bend. But before I got down, I made a bargain with him to drive us back to our hotel, and, after I had left my films, we set merrily off through the gathering dusk.

"There's one thing I don't understand," I said, at last. "The porter at the hotel said it was only two miles to the village. Yet we walked for an hour without getting there."

"He meant Irish miles, your honour," explained the jarvey, laughing. "There is an old saying that 'an Irish mile is a mile and a bit, and the bit is as long as the mile.' You see, here in ould Ireland we always stretch everything."

I have found since that the Irish mile is about a mile and a quarter; but this is no real measure of its elasticity. More than once thereafter we saw one mile stretch out to three; and we soon came to realise that the Irish mind is extremely vague and inexact when it comes to distances and directions.

We got back to the hotel to have our first view of what proved to be a nightly ceremony. On a stand in the entrance hall was a huge platter, and on the platter lay a huge salmon, and a card leaning against it announced that it weighed fourteen pounds and had been caught that day by Captain Gregory, and there were flowers all about it, so it's a proud fish it should have been. There were five or six other salmon on a lower table, each with a card giving its weight—anywhere from five pounds to eleven—and the whole collection represented the day's catch of the guests of the hotel.

For the hotel, being handy to the lakes, and clean and comfortable and homelike, is a favourite resort of the fishermen who come to Killarney during the salmon season. Every evening while we were there, as the fishermen came in, tired and wet, with their boatmen tramping behind them carrying the fish—if there were any—they were met at the door by the rotund porter, his face beaming like a full moon—a red harvest moon! —and the fish would be solemnly weighed, and the biggest would be decorated with flowers and awarded the place of honour, and the others would be grouped around it, and after dinner, the fishermen would stand and look at them, their hands deep in their pockets; and later on there would be a great bustle as the fish were wrapped in straw and tied up, ready to be sent by parcel-post to admiring friends back home!

It was a cosmopolitan crowd which gathered that evening after dinner about the big fireplace in the smoking-room, where a most welcome and comforting wood

fire blazed and crackled. The weather had turned very cold, and Betty and I were dressed as warmly as we had been at any time during the winter, though it was the fifth of June, and the papers were running long columns about the fearful heat wave which had America in its grip. There was a sturdy, red-faced old Scotchman in carpet slippers, and a sallow, heavy-lidded ancient whom the others addressed as "colonel," and just such a close-clipped, stiff-backed sporting squire as is Canon Hannay's Major Kent, of near Ballymoy; and there were two or three other Englishmen with no outstanding characteristic except their insularity; and the talk was of flies and rods and casts, and everybody was indignant at the suffragette who had rushed out on the track and tried to stop the Derby; and there was a steady emptying of tall glasses and a steadily-deepening cloud of tobacco smoke, and everybody was very comfortable and cosy. And presently the old Scotchman took pity on me as a mere American who knew nothing about the high mysteries of sport.

"It must be a great pleasure for you to sit before an open fire like this," he said.

"It is," I agreed. "There's nothing more pleasant than a wood fire."

"Ye may well say so. But of course in America you have nothing like it."

"Nothing like it?" I repeated, looking at him.

"Why no," he said. "You never see an open fire in America. All you have is steam pipes running all around the room."

I looked at him again to see if he was in earnest; and then I tried gently to disabuse his mind of that idea.

But it was no use. Indeed, he got rather huffy when I said I had never seen a room with steam pipes running all around it.

The savage insularity of the average Englishman is matter for never-ending amusement, once one has grown accustomed to his contempt. He believes that all American men are money-grubbers, and all American women social climbers, who chew gum and talk loudly, while their daughters are forward minxes who call their fathers "popper," and that men, women, and children are alike wholly lacking in culture and good-taste. The peculiar thing about it is that he never for an instant doubts his own good taste in telling one all this frankly to one's face.

This is no fancy sketch. My own opinion is that the average Englishman has no genuine feeling of friendship for America, and his ignorance of things American is abysmal. One day, on the boat coming home, a well-educated Englishman whom I had got to know, asked me the name of a man with whom I had been talking.

"That is Senator So-and-so," I answered.

"What is a senator?" he inquired.

I remember that one day Betty and I and two other Americans happened to be driving through the Tyrol in a coach with two Englishmen, and they began to discuss American railway accidents—a favourite topic with Englishmen when Americans are present; and one of them remarked that it was no wonder there were so many accidents in America, since when Americans built a railroad all they did was to lay the ties along on top of the ground and spike the rails to them. I

asked him if he had ever been to America, and he said no, and I advised him to run over and pay us a visit some time. This huffed him.

"Ah!" he said. "But what you Americans would give for a king!"

"Give for a king?"

"Yes; you would give anything for a king. Then you could have a court and an aristocracy, and some real society. You're sick of your limping, halting, make-believe government, and you know it!"

We all four stared at him in astonishment, wondering if he had gone suddenly mad. Then Betty got her breath.

"No," she said; "you're really wrong about that. You see we settled the king question back in 1776."

The rest was silence.

But really Englishmen aren't to blame for their distorted ideas of America, for they get those ideas from the English newspapers, and the only kind of American news most English newspapers publish is freak news. During that week, for instance, almost the only American news in any of the papers was about the terrific heat-wave, about Harry Thaw's escape from Matteawan, and about some millionaire who had taken bichloride of mercury by mistake, and lived for ten days or so afterwards, occupying the time very cheerfully in closing up his affairs. After his death, one of the great London dailies published a column editorial about the affair, reasoning in the most solemn manner that his survival for so long a time could have been due only to the remarkable tonic properties of the American climate.

With the Irish it is entirely different. In the first place, America is to them the haven to which a million Irishmen have fled from English persecution; and in the next place, their knowledge of the country comes not from newspapers but from letters written by relatives and friends. The letters are somewhat rosier, I fear, than the facts warrant, but they establish a kindly feeling which makes every Irishman ready to welcome the passing American as a friend and brother. The only trouble is that he is also apt to regard him as necessarily a millionaire.

It is undoubtedly true that a large portion of the lower-class Irish consider it no disgrace to beg from an American. Not that they are habitual beggars, but when an American comes their way, they seem to consider it a waste of opportunity if they do not apply for a small donation. In tourist centres, such as Dublin and Killarney, they are very persistent, especially the children, and will follow along for minutes on end telling the tale of their poverty and distress in queer bated voices, as though they lacked the strength to speak aloud. But Betty accidentally discovered a cure for this nuisance, quite as effective as John Minogue's, and I take pleasure in passing it on.

Like most other people who have lived together for a long time, we have developed a lot of symbols and pass-words, without meaning to any one but ourselves; and it has become a rather foolish habit of mine when we are together and I see something I especially admire, to express my admiration by uttering the single word "Hickenlooper." And Betty, if she agrees, says "Oppenheimer," and we understand each other and pass

on. One day in Cork, a group of children were unusually annoying, and followed along and followed along, until Betty, losing patience, turned upon them sharply, pointed her finger at them, and said "Oppenheimer!" I shall never forget the startled look in their eyes, as they stopped dead in their tracks, stared at her for an instant, and then fled helter-skelter. We decided afterwards that they thought she was putting a curse on them. She tried it more than once thereafter, and it never failed to work; so, if you are annoyed beyond endurance by juvenile beggars in Ireland, turn upon them sharply, point your finger at them, and say "Oppenheimer!"

And since I am giving advice, I will give one bit more before I close this chapter.

Among the purchases which Betty had made in New York, just before we sailed, was a small electric torch. I had derided it as unnecessary, but she had insisted on bringing it along, and had put it in our travelling-bag when we were sorting over our luggage in Dublin. The first night at Thurles, in a dreary little room, with only the flickering candle for a light, I acknowledged her wisdom, for the bright glow of the torch was very welcome. Again at Glengarriff candles were the only illumination, and that night at Killarney, when I got to our room, I found her in animated conversation with the chambermaid by the light of a single tallow dip. They were talking about America, I think, and the maid's eyes were shining with excitement and her cheeks were flushed and the beautiful soft brogue was rolling off her tongue, when a sudden gust from

the open window blew the candle out. Betty picked up the torch from the dresser and pressed the button.

"Glory be to God! What's that?" cried the girl, as the glare flashed into her astonished eyes.

"It's only a torch," said Betty. "It won't hurt you." And then, when I had lighted the candle again, she showed the girl how it worked.

"Glory be to God!" she cried again. "The wonder of it! You would niver be gettin' that in Ireland!"

"No; I got it in New York."

"Ah, 'tis a wonderful place," said the girl, reverentially. "No place but America would be havin' such things as that!"

Now this is no doubt a libel upon Ireland, for I suppose one can get electric torches there. At any rate, my advice is to get one somewhere—a good one—and take it along in your handbag. This advice is good for the continent as well as for Ireland, but it is especially good for the latter, and the reason is this:

In the old days, when English prodigals wasted their substance on castellated palaces, the Irish squire, being a wiser man, spent his money on good wine and good horses—or, when he had no money, ran light-heartedly into debt for them. As to his family mansion, he contented himself with adding a wing from time to time, as it might be needed, either because of the increasing number of his children, or the widening circle of his friends. The result was a singular house, often only one story high, never more than two, flung wide over a great deal of ground, and of a most irregular plan. Such a house had many advantages, for, as another

writer has pointed out, "at one end of it the ladies could sleep undisturbed, no matter how joyous the men were at the other; there were no stairs to fall down; and the long narrow corridors were pleasant to those who found it hard to direct their devious steps."

But the time came when these hospitable Irishmen found themselves overwhelmed by debt, their houses were taken from them, and many of them, since they were too large for any private family, were converted into inns. The traveller in rural Ireland will encounter more than one of them, and will find those long, shadowy, zig-zag corridors eerie places after night, unless he has a torch to light his steps. The doors are not always fitted with locks, and if the window is kept open, an intruder has only to step over the sill. We never had any intruder; but had we had, I am sure one flash from the torch would have sent him flying.

CHAPTER XII

THE "GRAND TOUR"

THERE are many excursions which can be made over and around the Killarney lakes, but the most important one—the "grand tour," so to speak—starts at the town, proceeds by car to Kate Kearney's cottage, then by pony through the Gap of Dunloe, then by boat the full length of the lakes to Ross Castle, and back to town again by car. This round takes a day to accomplish, and gives one a very fair idea of Killarney. It is about all most of the people who come to Killarney ever see of it. In fact, some of them don't see that much—as will presently appear.

Now Killarney is to Ireland what the Trossachs are to Scotland and Niagara Falls to America—in other words, its most famous show-place; and so it has passed more or less under the control of that ubiquitous exploiter of show-places, Thomas Cook. Cook arranges all the excursions, Cook controls most of the vehicles, Cook's boats are the biggest and safest, and so, if you wish to see Killarney "in the least fatiguing manner," you must resign yourself to Cook. Let me say here that I admire Cook; there is no place where a traveller is served more courteously, more fairly, or more intelligently than in a Cook office. No one need be ashamed to make intelligent use of Cook. The reason of his disrepute is that he has come to be used so largely by self-complacent people whose idea of seeing Europe

is to gallop from place to place in charge of a conductor. But that isn't Cook's fault.

Killarney is the one place in Ireland which every tourist wants to see, not because it is characteristically Irish, but because it has been very carefully exploited. In my own opinion, a trip to Holy Cross and Cashel, or to Mellifont and Monasterboice and the tombs of the kings, or to the congested districts of Connaught, is far better worth while. But the great bulk of tourist traffic follows the beaten path, and in Ireland the beaten path leads straight to Killarney.

As we sat at breakfast next morning, we witnessed the ceremonial rites involved in getting the fishermen started off for the day's sport. The rotund porter acted as major-domo, and puffed and panted and hurried hither and yon, his brow creased with the anxieties of his high office.

It is a point of honour with all true fishermen to wear only the most faded, rain-stained, disreputable of garments, and it was a weird-looking company which gathered in front of the hotel that morning, with their hats, decorated with many-coloured flies, flapping around their brick-red faces. There was one woman in the lot who was going out with her father—a short, square spinster, evidently hard as nails, with a face as red as the reddest, and boots as heavy as the heaviest. The wonder was that she didn't smoke a pipe like the others. They overhauled their tackle with great care—shook out the lines, tested rods and reels, examined the flies, and finally trudged away, the boatman following, laden with rain-proofs and lunch-basket

and gaff and landing-net, and with a broad grin on his face at the prospect of sharing his employer's tobacco and lunch, and of earning a few shillings in so pleasant a manner.

When we had finished breakfast, we went out to have a look at the weather, and found the sun shining brightly, with every prospect of a pleasant day. The porter assured us that there was no chance of rain; but we had already had some experience of the fickleness of the Irish climate, so we went back and prepared for the worst, and clambered presently to the seat of the car Cook sent for us.

On the way in to the village, we stopped at another hotel to pick up three American women who had been touring the continent and England, and who, by a long jump, had managed to squeeze in one day for Killarney before hastening on to Queenstown to catch their boat. They had arrived late the night before, and would leave for Cork as soon as the tour of the lakes had been completed, and they were jubilant because the day was so fine. They had feared it might rain, and that their long journey would be for nothing. The only protection against rain they had with them was two small umbrellas, and I could see that they were somewhat amused at our rain-coats and leggings.

There was a long open coach, with seats for about twenty people, waiting in front of Cook's office in the village, and presently, as cars drove in from the various hotels, this was filled to overflowing, and at last we rumbled away. We were fortunate in having been assigned to the front seat with the driver, a handsome, good-humoured fellow, not averse to talking;

and behind us we could hear the merry chatter of the happy and contented crowd. We passed the workhouse, which, as usual, is the biggest building in the place, and then the lunatic asylum, which is almost as big, and then we saw the ruins of Aghadoe high on the hillside—and then I felt a drop of rain on my cheek. There was another drop, and then another, and then a gentle patter, and then a rushing and remorseless downpour.

We held the rubber lap-robe up under our chins and the water ran down it in streams. The happy chatter had turned to exclamations of consternation and dismay, and we did not need to look around to realise the havoc which the rain was working. The driver chirruped to his horses and endeavoured to divert his passengers with a few stanzas of a classic Irish drinking song, rendered in a resounding baritone:

Let the farmer praise his grounds,
Let the huntsman praise his hounds,
The shepherd his dew-scented lawn;
But I, more blest than they,
Spend each happy night and day
With my charming little cruiskeen lawn, lawn, lawn,
With my charming little cruiskeen lawn.

"What does cruiskeen lawn mean?" asked a man's voice behind us.

"Oh, it is just a term of endearment," said a woman's voice in answer. "Don't you remember the song about Willy Reilly and his dear cruiskeen lawn?"

"Oh, yes," said the man.

I caught a twinkle in our driver's eye, but he said nothing. After all, Willy Reilly, being a true Irish-

man, no doubt loved his cruiskeen lawn, or little full jug, almost as well as his colleen bawn, or fair-haired lassie.

So we rolled merrily on, and presently turned into a hilly lane, where a crowd of ragamuffins mounted on bony steeds awaited us. These were the pony-boys, and a wild-looking lot they were as they fell in about us and proceeded to act as a sort of cavalry escort. We took a bridge and a steep grade beyond at a gallop, and drew up in front of a white-washed, slate-roofed little house, which our driver announced was Kate Kearney's cottage, and his bedraggled passengers made a break for its welcome shelter. It was Lady Morgan who celebrated Kate's charms in the ingenuous verses beginning,

> Oh, did you not hear of Kate Kearney?
> She lives on the banks of Killarney,
> From the glance of her eye shun danger and fly,
> For fatal's the glance of Kate Kearney,

and she is supposed to have lived somewhere in this neighbourhood, though it is a long way from the "banks of Killarney." At any rate, this spick-and-span cottage, very unlike Kate's, has been given her name, and I dare say that any of the girls who tend bar inside would answer to it, just to keep up the local colour.

The room into which the door opens has a bar at one end and an open fire at the other, and while the women of the party crowded about the fire, the men paused before the bar for a taste of potheen. There are many other opportunities to taste it before one gets through the gap, but if it is to be done at all, it would

better be done here, for here one gets a clean glass to drink it out of. The whiskey is supposed to be surreptitious, but of course it has paid the tax like any other; an inch of it is poured into the bottom of the glass, and then the glass is filled with milk, and one drinks it and smacks one's lips and looks knowing. I drank a glass of it in the interests of this narrative, and I am free to say I have drunk many things I liked better.

At the end of half an hour, everybody had managed to get fairly dry, and a prolonged discussion arose whether to go on through the gap or turn back to the town. The rain was still falling steadily, and there was no sign of break in the heavy clouds, though our conductor contended that they were clearing away to the westward. The motley crew of pony-boys, with their shaggy "coppaleens," were all most insistent that the shower would soon be over, and that it would be a great mistake to go back. Betty and I had already made up our minds: we were going to see the thing through whatever happened; but the rest of the crowd vacillated back and forth in cruel indecision, especially the three women who must see Killarney to-day or never. We advised them to risk it; but in the end, only one other member of the party, a little German Jew, decided to do so, and all the rest clambered back into the bus and were driven off toward the town. The Cook's conductor stayed with us to act as pilot.

I wish you could have heard the chorus of commendation from those Irish throats as Betty mounted her pony. Sure she was the brave lady, she was the wise lady, the torrents and cataracts would be that fine; let the featherbed trash drive off back to the town, sure

they were not worth a thought; the shower would soon pass by, and it would be a fine day, and anyway the Irish rain was a soft sweet rain that never did any harm, and the gap was the grandest sight in the whole world—so their tongues ran on.

I gave my camera into the keeping of the pony-boy who was going along with us, and scrambled into the saddle. I have had mighty little equestrian experience since my hobby-horse days, and I cannot pretend that I enjoyed that ride, for the road was rough and up-and-down and the pony anything but a smooth stepper. If I had it to do again, I think I should walk. The distance is only about five miles, and a person not thoroughly at home in the saddle has far more leisure to survey the beauties of the gap when he is using his own legs than when he is bumping along on a "coppaleen."

The accompaniments of the ride are more diverting than the ride itself. We had gone scarcely a dozen yards, when we found a photographer with his camera set up in the middle of the road, who took our pictures on the off chance that we'd buy one. Then from the shelter of a rock arose a battered human, with a still more battered cornet, which looked as though it had been used as a shillelagh in moments of absent-mindedness, and he offered to awake the echo for a penny. I produced the penny, but the blast he blew upon the horn was so faint and wavering that Echo slept on undisturbed. Then we came to an individual playing with great violence upon a wheezy accordion. The pony-boys said that he had been a great actor, but that rheumatism had overtaken him, so that he could strut the boards no longer, and he had finally been re-

duced to playing an accordion in the Gap of Dunloe, and they besought charity for him, as the most deserving case in the gap. And then we came to two men with a small cannon, which they offered to discharge for sixpence. And then began a long procession of barefooted old women, pretending to offer homeknit woollen socks and home-distilled potheen for sale, but really begging—begging most insistently, running along beside the ponies with their poor red feet slopping in the mud or slipping over the stones; voluble with their blessings if they got a small coin, and plainly thinking themselves insulted if they didn't.

Meanwhile, we had mounted into the gap along a rough and winding bridle-path, and a desolately-impressive place we found it. A little river, the Loe, runs at the bottom, and close on either side high, frowning, rock-strewn precipices tower steeply upwards. There is no sign of vegetation—except a patch of heather maintaining a perilous foothold here and there on the bare and desolate hills,—the Tomies on one side and McGillicuddy's Reeks on the other. And then, at what seemed the most desolate spot, we came to a substantial, two-storied house, a station of the Royal Irish Constabulary. What the police could find to do in such a desert was difficult to imagine; but we stopped a few minutes to talk with them, and they evidently welcomed the diversion.

Legend has it that the Gap of Dunloe was cleft by Finn MacCool with a single blow of his great sword, and that it was here, in the Black Lough into which the River Loe presently widens, that St. Patrick imprisoned the last snake in Ireland, by persuading it to

enter a box on the promise that he would release it to-morrow. When the morrow came, the too-trusting serpent reminded the Saint of his promise, and asked him to open the lid, but Patrick replied that it was not yet to-morrow, but only to-day, and so the snake is still there in the box on the bottom of the lake, waiting for to-morrow to come. It makes such a fearful bubbling sometimes that it scares all the fish away, so that, while there are fish in plenty in the other lakes, there is none in this. There is a bridge at one end of the lake, and if one makes a wish as one crosses it, the wish will come true.

The road mounts steadily, curving from side to side of the valley, and one should stop from time to time and look back, or the full beauty of the place will be lost. We found the wind rushing along the heights, as we worked our way upward, and the rain fairly poured at times, so that the cataracts performed splendidly. At least I can vouch for two of them—one down Betty's nose and the other down mine! But presently, the clouds blew away, and the rain stopped just before we came out on the heights above the Black Valley.

This is undoubtedly the most beautiful point of the ride. To the right a savage glen runs back into the very heart of the Reeks, ending in a pocket shut in by sheer and rugged precipices. Far below lies the valley, with a silver ribbon of a river winding through it, and to the left shine the blue waters of the upper lake.

I dismounted at this point, turned my pony over to the boy, and went down the winding road on foot, for

I didn't want anything to distract my eyes from this wonderful view. And presently we were down among the trees, before a little lodge called for some unknown reason "Lord Brandon's Cottage," in which sat a man to whom we had to pay a shilling each before we could pass to the landing-place at the head of the lake, where the boats and lunch were waiting. Killarney is about the only spot in Ireland which is exploited in this manner, but here you will find fees exacted at every turn—a petty annoyance which, added to the persistent begging and insistent demands for tips, does much to interfere with the pleasure of the Killarney trip.

At the landing we found two boats which had rowed up from Ross Castle during the morning—a small one with two oarsmen and a larger one with four. The conductor marshalled us into the big one, took his seat at the stern, got out our lunches, which had been sent up from the hotel, tucked us in with heavy waterproofs, drew the tiller-lines across his lap and gave the signal to start.

The upper lake is much the most beautiful of the three, with its many islands, and the high hills hemming it in. Near its lower end is Arbutus Island, and it is worth pausing a moment beside it to look at the arbutus, that handsomest of shrubs, with ruddy stem and glossy leaf, which is indigenous all about Killarney, but reaches its height of glory on this little island. It is impossible to tell where the outlet of the lake is, until you are right upon it, but it suddenly opens out between two high rocks, and the boat enters the Long Range—the winding river some three miles in length which connects the upper and middle lakes.

The rock on the left is called Colman's Leap, and the legend is that, once upon a time, this Colman, who was lord of the upper lake, was chased down the mountain by some supporters of The O'Donaghue, and took a flying leap across the river, in proof of which you may still see the print of his feet in the rock where he landed on the other side. Our guide offered to show us the foot-prints, if we required any proof of the story, but we assured him of our unquestioning belief.

The Reach itself is quite as beautiful as any of the lakes, for its banks are covered with the most varied and luxuriant vegetation; and once, as we drifted quietly along, we saw a red deer browsing among the bracken. And then we drifted past the foot of a great precipice, and the channel narrowed, the current quickened, and the boatmen prepared to run the rapids into the middle lake.

One of the boatmen was a wild-eyed old fellow, very nervous and fidgety, who had considerable difficulty in wielding an oar against the husky fellow opposite him, and more than once the steersman had admonished him to put more ginger into it. Now, as we drew near the rapids, his agitation increased, his eyes grew wilder than ever, and as the current caught us and we shot under the ancient arch of masonry called the Old Weir Bridge, he managed to strike his oar on a rock with a force that nearly broke it. The nose of the boat swerved alarmingly for an instant, but the steersman brought her round with a quick jerk, and in a minute more we were in the quiet waters of the middle lake. The atmosphere was far from quiet, however, as the

steersman relieved his mind. Let it be added that the rapids are not very terrible, as will be seen from the picture opposite this page, and even if the boat struck a rock and was ripped in two, one could get ashore without much difficulty.

Just beyond, at the "meeting of the waters," there is a whirlpool called O'Sullivan's Punchbowl, and every rock and cave along the shore has its tradition, many of them manufactured, I suspect, for the consumption of the summer visitor. Most of the traditions are of The O'Donaghue, Chieftain of the Glens. A long cave is O'Donaghue's Wine-cellar; a depression at its mouth is O'Donaghue's Chair; and a tall knoll beside it is O'Donaghue's Butler, otherwise Jockybwee.

The boat leaves the middle lake under another massive, high-hipped arch of masonry—Drohid-na-Brickeen, "The Bridge of the Little Trout," or Brickeen Bridge, as it is called now—and emerges into Glena Bay, another place of beauty; but, as we were gazing at its loveliness, the boat suddenly pitched sideways, then tried to stand on end, and we started round to find ourselves in the midst of an ugly expanse of white-capped water. We had never thought of rough water on Killarney; yet here it was, and mighty rough at that. The lower lake is five miles long and half as wide, and when the wind gets a good sweep at it, it can kick up a sea that is not to be despised.

"'Tis just O'Donaghue's white horses out for a frolic," said the steersman encouragingly, and took a new grip of his lines. The oarsmen bent to their work, and we headed out into the lake, for it was necessary to cross to Ross Island.

OLD WEIR BRIDGE, KILLARNEY

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

ROSS CASTLE, KILLARNEY

We said nothing, but held tight, and grinned palely at each other when the boat made a peculiarly ferocious pitch; the spray flew in sheets, the wind dashed the spindrift viciously in our faces, and we would have been very wet indeed but for the waterproofs. But after the first few minutes, we began to enjoy it, for it was evident that the boat was a staunch one, and even if it went over, it wouldn't sink. I don't suppose there was really any danger of its going over, though it hung at an alarming angle on the side of a huge wave, once or twice; and at the end of half an hour, we swept under the lee of Ross Island, and our sweating boatmen paused to take breath. The excitable one was trembling so he could scarcely get his pipe between his teeth.

That night at the hotel, Betty was talking to two Englishwomen who had hired a boatman to row them out to Inisfallen Island. The lake hadn't been especially rough when they went out, and it wasn't until they got out of the lee of the island on the return trip that they realised its fury. Their boatman, at the end of a few moments, found himself unable either to get ahead or to go back; the most he could do was to keep the boat's head to the waves, and for nearly an hour they tossed there, shipping great seas, bailing desperately, too frightened to be sea-sick, and finally giving themselves up for lost, when the wind shifted and their boatman managed to struggle past the point of Ross Island. They expressed surprise that their hair wasn't white, and said that they would consider all the remainder of their lives sheer gain, because they felt that, except for a miracle, they would have ended

on June 5, 1913. No doubt they exaggerated their danger, but just the same I would advise any one who is nervous on the water to be sure that the lower lake is fairly smooth before attempting to cross it. We certainly drew a breath of relief when we stepped ashore in the shadow of the ivy-clad ruins of Ross Castle.

The castle itself is not of especial interest, for all that is left of it is the ruin of the old keep, with some crumbling outworks, not nearly so imposing as Blarney. About the only reason to visit it is to get the view from the top, which is very fine. But it has some stirring associations, for it was the stronghold of the great O'Donaghue, whose legend dominates the whole district. The story goes that, every May morning just before sunrise, the old warrior, armed cap-à-pie, emerges from the lake, mounts his white horse, and rides like the wind across the waters, attended by fairies who strew his path with flowers.

It was here the Royalist forces made their last stand against Cromwell, and they thought they were safe, because the castle was a strong one, and was built on an island, which made it unusually difficult to attack; and furthermore there was an old legend which said it would never be taken until a fleet swam upon the lake. Ludlow brought an army of four thousand men over the mountains, and started a siege, but made little progress; and then, one morning, as the garrison looked out over the battlements, they saw a fleet of boats bearing down upon them across the lake, and they rubbed their eyes and looked again, only to see the boats nearer, and now they could discern the pieces of ord-

nance mounted in the bows and the soldiers who crowded them, and they were so awed by the fulfilment of the prophecy that they surrendered without more ado. That was the end of Ross Castle, but nobody knows certainly to this day how Ludlow got the boats over the hills from Castlemaine.

A pretty drive along the margin of the middle lake brought us back to the hotel, where we found all the fishermen assembled, for the water had been too rough for fishing. We hurried out of our wet things, and dinner certainly tasted good; and when we joined the others about the fire, that evening, we found that we had qualified for admission to their charmed circle by going through the gap and crossing the lake on such a day. We were no longer tenderfeet.

CHAPTER XIII

ROUND ABOUT KILLARNEY

We had been assured more than once, during our trip through the Gap of Dunloe, that the Irish rain is a soft, sweet rain, which does nobody any harm, and we found that this was true, for we felt splendidly next morning. The only evidence of our strenuous experience was a certain redness of visage, which grew deeper and deeper, as the days went on, until it approached that rich brick-red, which we had already noted as a characteristic of Irish fishermen.

The day was bright and warm, and after breakfast we walked in to the town to take a look at our films. We found the road even more beautiful in the morning than it had been in the evening, and, since we knew how long it was, it did not seem long at all. But we were rather disappointed in the films. I had not appreciated how much the moisture in the atmosphere diminished the intensity of the sun, and so most of the films were under-exposed. Amateur photographers in Ireland will do well to remember that they must use an aperture twice as large or an exposure twice as long as is necessary anywhere else.

We walked on in to the town, and were sauntering along looking in the windows, when some one touched me on the elbow.

"Hello, comrade," said a voice, and I swung around to find myself looking into the face of a tall, thin

American whom we had met at Dublin looking at the Book of Kells in Trinity College Library. We had fallen into talk upon that occasion, and he had confided to us that he was from Massachusetts, that he was a bachelor, that he had started out by himself to see Europe, and that he was very lonely. He looked lonelier than ever, standing on this Killarney street corner, and he said that he was getting disgusted with Ireland, that it seemed to be raining all the time, that Killarney wasn't half as beautiful as he had been led to believe, and that he had about made up his mind not to go up the west coast, as he had intended, but to go straight to the continent. We remarked that we intended going up the west coast, and I saw his eye light with anticipation, but there are some sacrifices too great for human nature, and I didn't suggest his coming along.

Perhaps the most interesting show-place in the vicinity of Killarney is Muckross Abbey, and we spent that afternoon exploring it and its grounds. Muckross is far surpassed in interest by many other Irish ruins, but it is very beautiful, embowered as it is in magnificent trees and all but covered with glistening ivy. It is not very old, as Irish ruins go, for it dates only from the latter half of the fifteenth century, when it was founded for the Franciscans. The gem of the place is undoubtedly the cloister, with its arcade of graceful arches ranged around a court and lighting a finely-vaulted ambulatory. In the middle of the court is a giant yew, many centuries old, which spreads its branches from wall to wall. It is encircled with barbed wire, and I don't know whether this is to pro-

tect it from vandals, or to protect vandals from it—for the legend is that whoever plucks a spray of this tree dies within a twelvemonth.

The adjoining graveyard is crowded with interesting old tombs, and as we were wandering about looking at them, a funeral arrived. The priest walked in front, reading the burial service, while his assistant walked beside him, holding an umbrella over him, for it had begun to rain. Both of them wore black and white scarfs draped over one shoulder and strips of black and white cloth tied about their hats. Behind them came the coffin, carried on the shoulders of four men, the pair in front and the pair behind gripping each other about the waist so as not to be thrown apart by the inequalities of the path. Then came the mourners, about a dozen men, each with a black streamer about his hat. A number of women came last, their shawls over their heads.

The coffin was placed on the ground, and every one knelt in the dripping grass, bareheaded under the drenching rain, until the service was concluded. One of the mourners, at the proper moment, produced from beneath his coat a little black bottle which proved to contain the holy water, and with this the priest sprinkled the rude black casket, with little crosses for the screw-heads. Then the priest and his assistant went away, and the men hastened to get to their feet and clap on their hats, and then there was a general production of black clay cutties, and in a moment a dozen deep puffs of smoke were floating away before the breeze.

The women of the party retired behind a corner of

MUCKROSS ABBEY, KILLARNEY

THE CLOISTER AT MUCKROSS ABBEY

the abbey to eat a bite of lunch, and the men stood around talking and smoking; and finally the caretaker produced four long-handled spades, and there was an animated discussion as to just where the grave should be dug. As is usually the case with Irish graveyards, this one was so crowded that it was no easy matter to find room for a fresh grave, but at last the spot was fixed upon, and four of the men fell to with the spades. When they grew tired, four others took up the work, and in half an hour the shallow grave was dug, the coffin placed in it, and the earth heaped back upon it. There was no keening.

One of the women who was with the party told us that the funeral procession had come all the way from the end of the upper lake, more than fourteen miles away, and that the deceased was a woman of ninety-six. Fancy the tragedies she must have seen! For she was a woman of twenty-six, married, no doubt, with children, in the famine of '47. How many of them died, I wondered, and how had she herself managed to survive the awful years which followed? Her home beyond the upper lake—I could close my eyes and see it—the dark little cabin with its thatched roof and dirt floor and single room; I could picture the rocky field from which she and her husband had somehow managed to wring a livelihood; I could see her running with her poor bare feet through mud and over stones beside some laughing tourist in the hope of getting a penny or two—

But it is too tragic to think about!

The shower passed, after a time, and we went on along a beautiful walk leading toward the lake—the

Friars' Walk, it is called, and it is bordered by century-old beeches, yews, pines and limes, the most magnificent trees that I have ever seen, so glorious and inspiring that we were lured on and on. We came to the shore of the lake, at last, where the waves have carved the rocks into beautiful and fantastic shapes, and we followed the shore a long way, stopping at every jutting headland for a long look out over the grey, wind-swept water. Then the path turned inland and came out upon the middle lake, and here we found the fishermen from our hotel just getting to land, in a very drenched and disconsolate condition, for the water had been too rough for good sport.

That evening before the fire, the old Englishman, of whom I have already spoken, relieved his mind to me upon the subject of Ireland and the Irish. He said it was no use to try to help the Irish: in the first place, they didn't deserve any help; in the second place they took your help with one hand and bludgeoned you with the other; and in the third place any attempt to help them only made matters worse. Take the old age pensions, for example. They were a farce. Hundreds and hundreds of farmers had given their property to their children, so that they could go into court and swear they possessed nothing and claim a pension. Thousands more who were nowhere near seventy were drawing pensions because there was no way to prove just how old they were. And most of the pension money went for drink. Every pensioner had credit at the public houses, and his pension was usually drunk away long before it was received. The only effect of the act had been to make the Irish worse drunkards

than ever—and they were already the worst in the world. That was the cause of their poverty; that was the reason they lived in filth and wretchedness. They were without ambition, without pride, without any sense of manhood or decency—all they wanted was whiskey, and they would do anything to get it. All this, I dare say, is the honest belief of a great many Englishmen; and there is in it just that small grain of truth which makes it sting.

But I grew tired of listening, after a time, and went out to the bar, where a very loquacious Ulsterman with the broadest of Scotch accents was explaining his woes to the grinning barmaid. He had just been dismissed, it seemed, from some position in the neighbourhood because he had "been out with a few friends" the night before. He was convinced that his late employer was no gentleman, because a gentleman would have understood the circumstances and overlooked them; he pronounced Kerry the most God-forsaken of counties, and announced his intention of getting back to Ulster as soon as he could. No doubt his experience in the south of Ireland made him a more rabid Orangeman than ever, and I suppose he lost no time in signing the covenant and enlisting in Ulster's "army."

We had planned to spend our last day at Killarney walking and driving about the neighbourhood, and we were delighted, when we came down to breakfast that Saturday morning, to find the weather all that could be desired, with the sun shining from a brilliant sky, and not a cloud upon it, except high, white, fair-weather ones flying before the wind. So as soon as we

had eaten, we started away on a car for a drive through the deer-park of the Earl of Kenmare, a walk along the "fairy glen" which traverses it, and then another drive up along the heights to the ruins of Aghadoe.

We met many little carts driving in to Killarney, for it was market day—the identical type which had already grown so familiar: a flat cart with a man driving, his legs hanging down, and his women-folks crouched behind him under their shawls, with their knees drawn up to their chins, and the shaggy donkey which furnished the motive power, trotting briskly and alertly along. I don't know what the poor Irish would do without this serviceable little beast, long lived and useful in so many ways, able to exist on stones and nettles, and costing only a pound or two. Betty was so impressed with their usefulness that she wanted to buy one and send it home, but that speculation fell through.

As we climbed higher and higher up the heights, the wind grew cold and cutting, but the view below us over the lakes to the south opened more and more—a glorious panorama of wood and hill and white-capped water, with ever-varying light and shade under the drifting clouds. But what a contrast between this smiling landscape and the one which met our eyes when we turned them to the north, where one bleak and desolate hill towered behind another, away and away as far as the eye could see, a wilderness of grey boulders and black, fissured crags.

The car stopped at last before some stone steps leading over a wall, but as we started to mount them, a woman came running out of a near-by cottage and in-

sisted on unlocking the gate for us, in the hope, of course, of getting a tip. She was the caretaker in charge of the ruins of Aghadoe, and she tried to tell us something about them, but the visitor who has to rely on her for information must content himself with very little.

The story, as I piece it together, is something like this: About the middle of the seventh century, there dwelt at Killarney a very holy man named St. Finian the Leper, and on Inisfallen, the largest of the Killarney islands, he founded an abbey, whose ruins may yet be seen there; and here at Aghadoe, the Field of the Two Yews, he built a church, which became the seat of a bishop. As was often the case, the original church proved, in time, to be too small, and an addition was tacked on to it. A round tower was also built as a protection against the Danes, and a little farther down the slope, a rude castle was put up as a residence for the bishop.

There is very little left of the castle and the round tower, but the walls of the church are still standing. The early church built by St. Finian forms the western part, or nave, and is entered by a beautiful round-headed doorway, of the familiar Celtic type. The rain of centuries has washed away much of the carving, but enough remains to show how elaborate it was. The windows here are also round-headed, but the later portion, or choir, is lighted by narrow lancet windows, which prove that it was built some time in the thirteenth century, after the Normans came. These are the only things of interest left in the ruins, and the visit to them is worth making not so much on their

account, as for the magnificent view over the lakes.

We drove back to Killarney along the border of the lower lake, through the Kenmare demesne, and past the many-gabled mansion of the Earl, which has since been destroyed by fire; and we spent a very pleasant hour wandering about the village. The main street at Killarney is unattractive enough, crowded as it is with shops whose principal stock in trade is post-cards and photographs and books of views and monstrosities in bog oak and Connemara marble—souvenirs, in a word, for Cook tourists to take home. But turn up any of the narrow lanes which branch off on either side, and there is authentic Ireland—the Ireland of plastered cottages and thatched roofs and half-naked children and gossiping women leaning over their half-doors.

As it was market day, the lanes were more than usually crowded, and I explored them one after another, to an accompaniment of much good-humoured chaffing from the girls and women, especially when I unlimbered my camera. Then we walked out and took a look at the cathedral, a towering structure, still uncompleted as to its interior and bare and cold, but an impressive proof of the influence of the church which could raise the money to build so great an edifice in this poverty-stricken land; and then we stopped at some of the shops and looked at the Irish homespun, and spent a little time at an auction-sale, where the bidding was very slow and cautious, and finally we caught the omnibus back to our hotel.

There was still one place we wished to see. That

was the Torc cascade, and, after tea, we set out to walk to it. The road lay for about a mile along the road skirting Muckross Lake, and then we came to a gate where a boy was waiting to exact a fee of ninepence. Then we mounted a steep path, under magnificent pines, close beside the brawling Owengarriff River, up and up, with a lovely view of the lakes opening below us; and finally we came to the cascade—a white welter of water slithering down over the black rocks, very beautiful and impressive.

We sat there for a long time, looking at it and at the stately wood which clothed the opposite hillside, and at the blue water lying far below us, and at the green hills away beyond, and we both agreed that, next to the view from the Kenmare road, this was the most glorious view to be had about Killarney. Subsequent reflection has not altered this, and, after the trip through the Gap of Dunloe and across the lakes, I should certainly place this one to the Torc cascade. Beside it, the view from Aghadoe is nowhere.

We went on reluctantly, at last, mounting still higher until we came to a path bearing away to the left through the woods, and we followed this until we came to a mountain road which we had been told was there. It is called the Queen's Drive, and I suppose Victoria passed this way during her visit to the lakes; and it led us past the reservoir which supplies Killarney with water, and on down through magnificent woods whose beauty is marred only by a lot of so-called "monkey trees"—a monstrosity which had annoyed us all through Ireland, but to which I have not yet referred.

The monkey tree is a sort of evergreen, with long, thin branches clad with close-growing foliage, and looking not unlike monkeys' arms. In fact, the tree itself resembles in a grotesque way a lot of monkeys swinging in midair, and hence its name. It is a hideous thing, and yet a specimen grows in every dooryard. There was one in front of our hotel, there were others along the road; here they had been planted in great numbers and reached an unprecedented size—but we were glad to observe that a few were dying. The monkey tree seems to be to Irish homes what the rubber-plant used to be to American ones, and it appalled us to see how many little ones were being started in tiny front yards, which they would one day overshadow and render abominable. I can only hope that, in some happy hour, a wave of reform will sweep over Ireland and carry these monstrosities before it.

We came out, at last, upon a little huddle of houses on the hillside above our hotel, and stopped to talk to some children and their mother, then went on downward, in the gathering dusk, very happy because of a beautiful and satisfying day. And just as we turned into the highroad, Betty saw something gleaming on the ground at her feet, and stooped and picked up a shilling. From what ragged pocket had it fallen, we wondered? How great a tragedy would its loss represent? We looked up and down the road, but there was no one in sight. So we decided to keep it for luck, and we have it yet.

CHAPTER XIV

O'CONNELL, JOURNEYMAN TAILOR

THERE was quite a crowd on the platform, that Sunday morning, of travellers turning their backs on Killarney, and we found ourselves eventually in a compartment with two Americans, man and wife, who were plainly in no pleasant humour. The man was especially disgruntled about something, and I judged from his exclamations that he had got decidedly the worst of it when it came to settling the bill. It is in some such mood as this, I fear, that many people leave Killarney.

But the view from the window soon made us forget our fellow-passengers. The road runs for a time close beside the Flesk, one of the prettiest of Irish rivers, while away to the south rose the beautiful Killarney hills, peak upon peak, with mighty Mangerton dominating all of them. And then came the Paps, two conical elevations separated by a deep ravine; and then the bleak brown slopes of the Muskerry hills, with a ruined castle of the McCarthys guarding the only pass into the valley. To the north a boggy plain stretched away and away, ridged with black pits, like long earthworks, from which the turf had been cut.

The hills to the south grew gradually less rugged, and presently we dropped into the beautiful valley of the Blackwater, with many ruined castles perched on the crags which overshadow it—castles built by the McCarthys, the O'Callaghans, and I know not what

other septs, memorials of the old days of raid and counter-raid, of warring clans and treacherous chieftains.

And then we came to Mallow, and had to change into another carriage, where we found five Americans, who were also coming from Killarney, and who also believed that they had been held up. Their grievance was against the hotel at which they had stopped, and they said wildly that it was no better than a den of thieves. This, of course, was an exaggeration, and, in any event, I did not pity them much, for it was soon evident that their visit to Ireland had been a waste of time. They knew nothing of her history and traditions; her ruins held no meaning for them; her empty valleys told them nothing of her past; they had never heard of Cormac, or Finn the Fair, or Ossian, or Conn the Hundred Fighter, or even of Brian Boru; they had never heard of that old civilisation which the Danes swept away, and saw nothing very wonderful in the Cross of Cong or the Book of Kells. So to them Ireland had proved a disappointment, just as she will to every one who visits her in ignorance and indifference.

We reached Limerick Junction, at last, and changed thankfully to the branch which runs to Limerick, twenty miles away. And almost at once we came upon traces of Patrick Sarsfield, of glorious memory, for a few miles beyond the Junction, to the left of the line, are the ruins of a castle, which was held by the English, but which he surprised one night, on one of those famous raids of his, and captured and blew up. And then the line mounted the hills which divide the Vale

of Tipperary from the valley of the Shannon, crossed them, and came out upon a land as beautiful and fertile as any we had seen in Ireland. Such lushness, such greenness, such calm, quiet loveliness can surely be matched in few other spots upon this earth.

It was still early afternoon when the train rolled in to the station at Limerick, and on the platform we met the actor and his wife whom we had talked with at Blarney a week before. They had come to Limerick, where their principal was a great favourite, for a three weeks' engagement. I saw the actor afterwards on the street, and he told me that the theatre was in terrible shape, for some misguided enthusiasts had attempted to hold a Unionist meeting there, a few days previously, and the patriotic Limerickians had nearly torn the place to pieces.

Limerick is by far the most important town of central or western Ireland; in fact it is surpassed in population only by Belfast, Dublin and Cork, and it has many amusing points of resemblance to the two latter. It is divided into two parts by a branch of the Shannon; it has one long, curving principal street leading to a bridge; the street is known officially as George Street, after an English king, but to all Irishmen it is O'Connell Street, in honour of the Liberator whose statue is its chief adornment; this street is a street of bright and attractive shops, not in itself interesting, but cross the bridge to the older part of the town, or turn up any of the little lanes which lead off from it, and you will find nothing more picturesque anywhere —nor more distressful.

We walked along George Street, that afternoon, and

crossed the bridge to the island on which Limerick had its birth. The bridge is called Matthew Bridge, not after the Disciple, but after Ireland's great apostle of temperance. Beyond the bridge is a maze of narrow, crooked streets, and we made our way through them to the old cathedral, whose tower served as guide. We got there just as vespers were over, and we found the verger very willing to show us about.

I do not imagine there are many Protestants at Limerick; at least, a very small portion of this impressive old church serves the needs of the congregation, and the rest of it is bare and empty—and imposing. Rarely indeed have I seen a more sombre interior, for the walls are very massive, and the windows small, and there is a surprising number of dark little chapels —the principal one, of course, being dedicated as a burial place for the Earls of Limerick. The carved miserere seats are worth examining, as are also many of the old tombs which clutter the interior. There is an elaborate one to the Earl of Thomond in the chancel, and a carved slab covering the grave of Donall O'Brien, King of Munster, who founded the cathedral in 1179; but among the quaintest is a slab built into the wall of the nave with this epitaph cut upon it:

MEMENTO MORY
HERE LIETH LITTELL SAMUEL
BARINGTON THAT GREAT UNDER
TAKER OF FAMOUS CITTIES
CLOCK AND CHIME MAKER
HE MADE HIS ONE TIME GOE
EARLY AND LATTER BUT NOW
HE IS RETURNED TO GOD
HIS CREATOR

THE 29 OF NOVEMBER THEN
HE SCEST AND FOR HIS
MEMORY THIS HERE IS PLEAST
BY HIS SON BEN
1693

We spent a very pleasant half hour in the church, and then we wandered on through the crooked streets to the magnificent Norman castle, set up here to defend the passage of the Shannon. Most venerable and impressive it is, with its great drum towers, and curtains ten feet thick. Just in front of it the Shannon is spanned by a fine modern bridge, replacing the ancient one which was the scene of so many conflicts, and at the farther end of it, mounted on a pedestal, is the famous stone on which Sarsfield signed his treaty with the English in 1691—the treaty which guaranteed equal rights to Catholics, but which, as every Catholic Irishman somewhat too vividly remembers, resulted only in a more bitter persecution. Irish memory, curiously enough, seems always to grow clearer with the passing years, and the mists of two centuries accentuate, rather than obscure, the fame of Limerick as "The City of the Violated Treaty." The story runneth thus:

The River Shannon, with its wide estuary, its many lakes, and its mighty current flowing between impassable bogs or beetling cliffs, has always been a formidable barrier between east and west Ireland. In the old days, the only doors in this barrier was the ford at Athlone, just below Lough Ree, and another all but impassable one at Killaloe, just below Lough Derg; but in the ninth century, the Danes sailed up from the sea, landed on an island at the head of the tideway,

fortified it, and so started the city of Limerick. The current of the river was divided here, and the invaders managed in time to get a bridge across, and so opened another door in the Shannon barrier. Brian Boru drove them out, at last, and then the Normans came and, after their fashion everywhere, rendered their hold secure by erecting a great round-towered castle to guard the bridge. Edward Bruce captured it in 1316, and three centuries later, Hugh O'Neill held it for six months against Cromwell's great general, Ireton. The Ironsides captured it, finally, and Ireton died of the plague not long afterwards in a house just back of the cathedral.

But it was in the war against William of Orange that Limerick played its most distinguished part. I have already told how the Irish chose the cause of the Stuarts against the Parliament; how they proclaimed Charles II king as soon as his father's head was off, and of the vengeance Cromwell took. So it was inevitable that they should espouse the cause of James II against the Protestant William, whom the English had called over from the Netherlands to be their king. James came to Ireland to lead the rebellion, proved himself an idiot and a coward, and ended by running away and leaving the Irish to their fate.

William's troops swept the country, took town after town and castle after castle, until Limerick remained nearly the last stronghold in Irish hands. So William marched against it, at the head of 26,000 men, but the position was a very strong one, and that ablest of Irish generals, Patrick Sarsfield, was in command of the town, and William was beaten back. The next year

another great army under General Ginkle marched against the place, first capturing Athlone, and so getting across the river. A terrific attack was concentrated on the fortress guarding the bridge, a breach was made, the fort stormed, and the garrison put to the sword, only about a hundred out of eight hundred escaping across the other branch of the river into Limerick.

Sarsfield still held the town, but his men were disheartened by the loss of the castle. Ginkle, on the other hand, realised that to take the town would be no easy task. A truce was proposed, negotiations began, both sides were eager to end the war, and the result was that the famous Treaty of Limerick was signed by Ginkle and Sarsfield on the third day of October, 1691, on a stone near the County Clare end of the bridge over the Shannon.

There were twelve articles in the treaty, and some of them were kept—the one, for instance, permitting all persons to leave the country who wished to do so, and to take their families and portable goods along; but one was not kept, the most important one, perhaps, which provided that Irish Catholics should enjoy all the religious rights they possessed under Charles II, and that all Irish still in arms, who should immediately submit and take the oath of allegiance, should be secured in the free and undisputed possession of their estates. In a word, the price of peace was to have been a general indemnity and freedom of religious worship. It was not an excessive price, but it was never paid.

The Protestant colonists in Ireland protested in great wrath that they had been betrayed, and the Irish Parliament, which the colonists controlled, after a bitter

fight, repudiated the treaty, or, at least, confirmed only so much of it as "consisted with the safety and welfare of his Majesty's subjects in Ireland," and passed a number of new laws aimed at Catholics, disqualifying them from teaching school, from sending their children abroad to be educated, from observing any holy day except those set apart by the Church of Ireland, and many others of the same sort, some of almost insane malignity. All this was, of course, quite unjustifiable, but "King Billy" seems to have been in no way responsible for it. In any event, it happened more than two centuries ago, all these laws have long since been repealed, and it seems absurd to keep their memory so fresh and burning.

One word more, and I am done with history. After the surrender of Limerick, Sarsfield and his men were given the choice of enlisting in William's army or leaving the country. They chose the latter, and went to France, where the last Catholic king of England had sought refuge. He, of course, was unable to maintain them, so they enlisted under the French king, Louis XIV, and formed the Irish Brigade, which was afterwards to become so famous, and in which, during the next fifty years, nearly half a million Irishmen enlisted, as the best means of avenging themselves on England. The part they played at Landen, at Barcelona, at Cremona, at Blenheim, at Ramilles, and finally at Fontenoy—all this is matter of history.

We crossed the bridge again, after a look at the treaty stone—which, enshrined on its lofty pedestal, is really a monument to English perfidy—passed the

castle, and plunged into the crooked streets of "English Town," as this oldest part of Limerick is called, with its tall, foreign-looking, tumbledown houses—as picturesque a quarter as I have seen anywhere. For Limerick grew into an important city in the century following its capture by the English, and many wealthy people put up handsome town-houses, four or five stories high, with wide halls and sweeping stairs and beautiful doorways and tall windows framed in sculptured stone. It is these old houses which shadow the narrow lanes of "English Town," and they are all tenements now, for the well-to-do people—such of them as are left—have moved over to the newer, more fashionable, more sanitary quarter. No attempt is made to keep them in repair, and many of them have fallen down, leaving ragged gaps in the street. Others seem in imminent danger of falling, and the distressed look of the place is further heightened by the great fragments of the old walls which remain here and there.

This part of Limerick is on the island where the town started; the part just beyond the bridge which leads to the mainland is called Irish Town, and it, too, was once included in the city walls, a long stretch of which is still standing back of the ancient citadel. Here too, especially along the quay, are handsome houses, long since fallen from their high estate, and now the homes of the poorest of the poor, a family in every room. It is something of a shock to see these ragged and distressed people climbing the beautiful stairways, or sitting in the handsome doorways or leaning out of the carved windows, very much at home in the place which was once the abode of wealth and

fashion, while the noisy play of dirty and neglected children echoes through the rooms which once rang with gentle laughter and impassioned toast.

Newtown-Pery, the newer part of the town, built on land reclaimed from the river by the Pery family, the Earls of Limerick, who still own it, contrasts strongly with the older part, for its streets are wide and straight and run regularly at right angles, and it is a bustling place, but quite without interest to the stranger. The houses are almost uniformly four stories high, and are built of a peculiar dark-brown brick, which makes them look much older than they really are. And down along the water-front are nearly a mile of quays, with floating docks and heavy cranes, and towering warehouses looking down upon them.

Time was when Limerick fondly hoped to become the greatest port in Ireland. She had every advantage —a noble situation on the broad estuary of the Shannon, up which ships from America could sail direct to her wharves—but in spite of great expenditures to improve her harbour facilities, not only did no new trade come, but such as she already had withered and withered, until to-day her tall warehouses are empty, her quays almost deserted, and in the broad expanse of the Shannon there are few boats except excursion steamers and pleasure yachts.

The cause of this decay? Irishmen assert that there is only one cause—unjust and discriminating laws passed by England to protect her own trade by destroying Irish industry. No doubt this is true; but these laws have been repealed for many years, and there is little evidence of the healthy revival of these indus-

tries anywhere in Ireland. Such revival as there is has been carefully fostered by various government agencies; there has been no great spontaneous revival, and perhaps there never will be. But it is a melancholy sight—the empty, decaying mills, the idle factories, the deserted warehouses, the ruined dwellings, which the traveller sees all up and down the land.

I went out for another stroll about the town, after tea, for I wanted to see the new Catholic cathedral, whose tall spire dominates the landscape for many miles around. And as I went, I could not but notice the impress the English have left on the names of the streets. The principal street, as I have said already, is George Street; then there is Cecil Street, and William Street, and Nelson Street, and Catherine Street, and George and Charlotte Quays opposite each other. There is one, however, named after a local celebrity whom all Irishmen should delight to honour—Gerald Griffin, an authentic poet, whose "Eileen Aroon" is one of the tenderest and most musical of lyrics.

Gerald Griffin Street is one of the most important in Limerick, and it is by it that one gains the cathedral, an impressive building, especially as to its interior, dimly lighted through high, narrow lancet windows. And here again one admires not so much the church itself, as the indomitable spirit which could undertake the task of building such an edifice in want-stricken Ireland.

The Sarsfield monument is in the cathedral square, a rampageous figure, charging with drawn sword off the top of a shaft of stone—perhaps the most ridiculous

tribute to a great soldier and patriot to be seen anywhere on this earth. I, at least, have never seen any to match it, unless it be that imperturbable dandy, supposed to represent Andrew Jackson, who calmly doffs his chapeau from the back of a rearing horse in front of our own White House!

I walked on, after that, down toward the quays, along little lanes of thatched houses, and then back into the region of the old mansions, with their chattering women and sprawling children; and then, suddenly, I became aware of the girls.

Limerick, like Cork, is supposed to be famous for the beauty of its women, and the younger generation was out in force, that Sunday evening, rigged up in its best clothes, evidently ready for any harmless adventure. There *were* some nice-looking girls among them, no doubt of that, with bright eyes and red lips and glowing cheeks, and the advent of a stranger in their midst filled them with the liveliest interest, which they were at no pains to dissemble. I know nothing about the psychology of Irish girls, for I was not in a position to investigate or experiment; but while they are shy, at first, I should judge that most of them are not altogether averse to mild flirtation. The glance of their eye is not, perhaps, as fatal as Kate Kearney's, but it is very taking.

I wish I could say as much for the boys; but if there are any witty, invincible Rory O'Mores left in Ireland, I didn't see them. The Irish young man seems very different indeed from the light-hearted, audacious, philandering scapegrace so dear to Lover and Lever and scores of lesser poets, and once so familiar upon the

stage. They are not forever breaking into song, they do not brim with sentiment, they are not, so far as I could judge, full of heroic emotions and high ambitions. In fact, they are quite the opposite of all that—matter-of-fact, humdrum, rather stupid.

Of course there are exceptions, and I was fortunate enought to meet one that very evening. I stopped in at a tobacconist's to get a paper, and fell into talk with the proprietor; and presently there entered a man who bought a pennyworth of tobacco, filled his pipe, and then remained for a word, seeing that I was a stranger. We were talking about Ireland, and in a very few minutes the newcomer had the centre of the stage.

O'Connell, journeyman tailor, so he introduced himself, and I wish I could paint a picture of him that would make him live for you as he lives for me. He was a faded little man, of indeterminate age, with a straw-coloured moustache and sallow skin, but his eyes were very bright, and before long his face was glowing with an infectious enthusiasm. His clothes were worn and shabby, but one forgot them as he stood there and talked—indeed they even lent a sort of dignity to his lean, nervous little figure.

First he told of how Cleeve, the big butter man, was trying to get the city to close the swing bridge over the Shannon, so that his heavy trams, which went about the country collecting milk, could cross it. To close the bridge would shut off permanently about four hundred yards of quay; but, so Cleeve argued, the quays were little used, and the town would never need that stretch above the bridge. But O'Connell did not believe it.

"'Tis true," he said, "that England with her cruel laws, has killed our trade and brought us all to want; 'tis true that we have no use for the quay at present. But all that will be changed when we get Home Rule. Then, sir, you will see our quays crowded with boats from end to end; you will see our mills and factories humming with life, you will see our warehouses piled with commodities from every quarter of the world. To shut off part of them, just because this bloated butter-maker wants it, would be a crime against the people of this town."

"How is all this to be brought about?" I asked.

"'Tis you Americans will be doing it, sir. The Irish in America, our brothers, God bless them, will rally to the ould land. Her children will come home to the Shan Van Vocht, once she is free of England. 'Tis them ones will set us on our feet again. They will be putting their money into our industries, till in the whole island there will be not an idle wheel or a smokeless chimney."

I told him I was afraid his dreams were too rosy; that the American Irish, like all other Americans, would be governed by dividends, not by sentiment, in the investment of their money. But nothing could shake his belief in the good time coming. I asked him what he thought of Ulster, and he laughed.

"The Protestants have nothing to fear from Home Rule," he said. "'Tis them will control this government. We Catholics are going to pick the best and strongest men in this island to man the ship, and there will be more Protestants than Catholics amongst them. We will need strong arms at the helm, and what do we

care what their religion may be, if only they're good men and true? You're a Protestant, I take it, sir?"

"Yes," I said; "I am."

"And does that make me think any the less of you? Not a bit of it. 'Tis the same God we look at, only with different eyes."

"Not even that," I corrected; "with the same eyes—just from a different angle."

"You've said it, sir. I can't improve on that. Well then, what is it the Ulster men are afraid of? They say it's the priests. But how silly that is! Let them look back into history, and see what has happened when the priests interfered with things that did not concern them. In spiritual matters I bow to my priest; in everything else, I am independent of him. It is so with all Irishmen, and has always been. Do you remember what the great O'Connell said: 'I would as soon,' said he, 'take my politics from Stamboul as from Rome.' Do you remember what happened when Rome tried to prevent the Catholics of Ireland from contributing to the testimonial for the greatest patriot Ireland has ever had, Charles Stewart Parnell? But of course you don't. I'll just tell you. Why, sir, the whole country was on fire from end to end. 'Make Peter's Pence into Parnell's Pounds' was the battle-cry, and the money poured in like rain. Mr. Parnell's friends had hoped to raise fifteen thousand pounds for him. When they got the money counted at last, they had near forty thousand pounds. What do you think of that now?"

'I think it was fine," I said. "But why is it, then, Ulster is so frightened?"

"Ah, Ulster isn't frightened—it's just a lot of talk from people who live by talkin'. There's many Catholics who are against Home Rule, and there's many Protestants who are for it. They'll all be for it, after they've tried it a while. And we won't let the Protestants stay out—we can't afford to—we need them too much. Why, sir, our leaders have always been Protestants, and I'm thinking always will be."

"There was O'Connell," I reminded him.

"I have not forgotten him—I quoted him but a moment since; and 'tis true he was a great man and a true patriot. But he fell into grievous error when he chose Catholic emancipation, when he might have got Home Rule. What did Catholic emancipation mean to me and thousands like me? It meant just nothing at all. It meant that some Catholics of O'Connell's own class could hold jobs under government—that was all. The greatest man this island ever produced, sir, was a Protestant. I have mentioned him already; his name was Charles Stewart Parnell!"

I wish you could have seen his shining eyes and heard his quivering voice as he went on to tell me about Parnell; and how, after the scandal which ruined his life—a scandal prearranged, so many think, by his political enemies—he had come to Limerick to address a meeting, with death in his face and a broken heart in his eyes; and there had been some in the crowd that hissed him and pelted him with mud; and the little tailor, his chest swelling at the old glorious memory, told how he had been one of those who rallied around the stricken leader and beat the crowd back and got him

safe away. There were tears in his eyes before he had ended.

"Ah, woman," he went on, "'twas not only Parnell you ruined then, it was ould Ireland, too! And not for the first time! Why, sir, 'twas because of a woman the British first came to this island. Troy had her Helen, as Homer tells, and so had Erin. 'Twas the same story over again. Dervorgilla the lady's name was, and she was the wife of Tiernan O'Rourke, Prince of Breffni, who had his fine castle on the beautiful green banks of Lough Gill. It was there that Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, saw her, and after that no other woman would do for him. So he courted her in odd corners and whispered soft honeyed words into her ear; and she listened, as women will, and her head was turned by his flattery. One day her husband, who was a pious man, kissed her good-bye and started on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg; and he was there nine days; and when he came back, what did he find? Ah, sir, Tom Moore has told it far better than I can:

"'The valley lay smiling before me,
Where lately I left her behind;
Yet I trembled, and something hung o'er me,
That saddened the joy of my mind.
I looked for the lamp which, she told me,
Should shine when her Pilgrim returned;
But, though darkness began to enfold me,
No lamp from the battlements burned!

"'I flew to her chamber—'twas lonely,
As if the loved tenant lay dead;—
Ah, would it were death, and death only;
But no, the young false one had fled.

And there hung the lute that could soften
My very worst pains into bliss;
While the hand, which had waked it so often,
Now throbbed to a proud rival's kiss.' "

I wish I could convey the tremor of the voice with which O'Connell, journeyman tailor, recited these silly lines. I can see him yet, standing there, one hand against his heart, his eyes straining up to the battlements from which no welcoming light gleamed. I can see the proprietor of the little shop, as he lounged against his counter, smiling good-naturedly. I can see the two or three other men who had drifted in, listening with all their ears.

And then O'Connell went on to tell how O'Rourke, finding his wife had fled with MacMurrough, appealed to his overlord, King Turlough O'Conor, and how the two of them so harassed MacMurrough that he was compelled to restore Dervorgilla to her husband and to flee to England, where he went to Strongbow and persuaded him to bring his Normans to Ireland to help him in his feud; and how Strongbow, once he got a firm grip on the land, refused to loosen it, and the curse of English rule had been on Ireland ever since.

I looked this story up, afterwards, and found that legend tells it much as O'Connell did, and it is probably true. But, just the same, it is hardly fair to lay the whole blame for Ireland's woes on Dervorgilla, for the Normans had been looking longingly across the Irish Sea years before MacMurrough fled to them, and would no doubt have crossed it, sooner or later, without an invitation. The tragic point of the story is that, as

usual, the invader found the Irish divided and so unable to resist. We shall see the castle from which Dervorgilla fled, before our journey is done, and also the place where she lies buried, at Mellifont, in the valley of the Boyne.

The quotation from Tom Moore had turned my little tailor's thoughts toward poetry, and he asked if I knew this poem and that, and when I didn't, as was frequently the case, he would quote a few lines, or sing them, if they had been set to music.

"Of course you know 'To the Dead of Ninety-eight'?" he asked.

"Yes," I said; "but that is not Johnson's noblest poem. Do you know his 'Ode to Ireland'?"

"I do not," he answered. "Let us have it, sir."

How sorry I was that I couldn't let them have it, or didn't have a copy that I could read to them, for it is a stirring poem; I had to confess that I didn't know it, but I can't resist quoting one splendid stanza now—

> "No swordsmen are the Christians!" Oisin cried:
> "O Patrick! thine is but a little race."
> Nay, ancient Oisin! they have greatly died
> In battle glory and with warrior grace.
> Signed with the Cross, they conquered and they fell;
> Sons of the Cross, they stand:
> The Prince of Peace loves righteous warfare well,
> And loves thine armies, O our Holy Land!
> The Lord of Hosts is with thee, and thine eyes
> Shall see upon thee rise
> His glory, and the blessing of His Hand.

"Have you heard Timothy Sullivan's 'Song from the Backwoods'?" he asked me finally, and when I said I

never had, he sang it for the assembled company, and a splendid song I found it. Here it is:

Deep in Canadian woods we've met,
From one bright island flown;
Great is the land we tread, but yet
Our hearts are with our own.
And ere we leave this shanty small,
While fades the Autumn day,
We'll toast Old Ireland!
Dear Old Ireland!
Ireland, boys, hurray!

We've heard her faults a hundred times,
The new ones and the old,
In songs and sermons, rants and rhymes,
Enlarged some fifty-fold.
But take them all, the great and small,
And this we've got to say:—
Here's dear Old Ireland!
Good Old Ireland!
Ireland, boys, hurray!

As he went on with the song, the others in the shop warmed up to it and joined in the chorus so lustily that a crowd gathered outside; and the shopkeeper got a little nervous, fearing, perhaps, a visit from some passing constable, and he whispered in O'Connell's ear, when the song was done, and there were no more songs that evening.

But still we sat and talked and smoked and O'Connell told me something of himself: of the fifteen shillings a week he could earn when he had steady work; of the three-pence a week he paid out under the insurance act, and how, if he was sick, he would draw

a benefit of ten shillings a week for six months. He said bitterly that, if he lived in England, he would get free medical attendance, too, but that had been refused to Ireland through the machinations of the doctors and their friends. He told of the blessing the old age pension had been to many people he knew, and he admitted that England had been trying, of late years, to atone for her old injustices toward Ireland, and was now, perhaps, spending more money on the country than she got out of it.

"But there is a saying, sir, as you know," he concluded, rising and knocking out his pipe, "that hell is paved with good intentions; and however good England's intentions may be, she can never govern us well, because she can never understand us. Besides, it's not charity we want, it's freedom. Better a crust of bread and freedom, than luxury and chains! We'll have some hard fights, but we'll win out. Come back in ten years, sir, and you'll see a new Ireland. Take my word for it. It's glad I am that I came in here this night," he added. "I was feeling downcast and disheartened; but that is all over now. This talk has been a great pleasure to me. Good-bye, sir; God save you!" and he disappeared into the night.

CHAPTER XV

THE RUINS AT ADARE

We threw back the shutters, next morning, to a cold and dreary day of misting rain; and after a look at it, Betty elected to spend it before a cosy fire in our great, high-ceilinged room. I have wondered since if our hotel at Limerick was not one of those handsome eighteenth-century mansions, brought by the hard necessities of time to the use of passing travellers. It is difficult to explain the gorgeousness of some of its rooms on any other theory. Ours was a very large one, with elaborate ceiling-mouldings and panelled walls and a mantel of carved marble, which Betty inspected longingly. She could see it, I fancy, in her own drawing-room, and perhaps its beauties had something to do with her decision to spend the day in front of it.

There were two or three pictures I wanted to take—one of the old castle and another of the crooked little lane I had wandered through the night before; so I set forth to get them, along busy George Street, with its bright shops, and then across the river to English Town, and so to the castle front. I found it very hard to get anything like a satisfactory picture of it, because the parapet of the new bridge is in the way, and because the angle of my lens was not wide enough to take in both the towers. I did the best I could, took a last look at the treaty stone, but forbore to add to its fame by photographing it; and then traversed again the

quaint old streets, with their ramshackle houses, and so came to the little lane.

The town, as I came through it, had been full of market-carts drawn by ragged donkeys and driven by shawled women, and I loitered about for a time, hoping that one of them would come this way and so add a touch of human interest to my picture. A painter was busy giving one of the thatched houses a coat of white-wash; only it wasn't white-wash, properly speaking, because a colouring-matter had been added to it which made it a vivid pink. This pink wash is very popular in Ireland, and, varied sometimes by a yellow wash, adds a high note to nearly every landscape. I talked with the man awhile, and then, the rain coming down more heavily, I slipped into a cobbler's shop for shelter.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more comfortless and primitive than that interior. The shop occupied one of the two rooms of the family home—bare little rooms with dirt floors and tiny windows and no furniture except the most necessary. Somebody has said that there are two pieces of furniture always worthy of veneration—the table and the bed; but I doubt if even that philosopher could have found anything to venerate in the specimens which this house contained. The table was a rude affair of rough boards, with one corner supported by a box in lieu of a leg, and the bed was a mere pile of rags on a sort of low shelf in one corner. What sort of fare was set forth upon that table, and what sort of rest the bed afforded, was not difficult to imagine.

The cobbler was tapping away at a pair of shoes,

trying to mend them, and sadly they needed it. Indeed, they were such shoes as no self-respecting tramp would wear in America, and I could not but suspect that the cobbler had fished them from a garbage heap somewhere, and was trying, as a sort of speculation, to make them worth a few pennies. Two or three blocks of turf smoked and flared in a narrow fire-place, and, as always, a black pot hung over them, with some sort of mess bubbling inside it. The cobbler's wife sat on a stool before the fire contemplating the boiling pot gloomily, and a dirty child, of undeterminable sex, played with the scraps of leather on the floor.

I apologised for my intrusion; but the atmosphere of the place was not genial. I fancied they resented my presence,—as I should have done, had our positions been reversed—and so, as soon as the downpour slackened a bit, I pressed a penny into the baby's fist and took myself off. The cobbler, suddenly softened, followed me outside to see me take the picture, and perhaps to be in it; but that picture was a failure, all spotted by the rain.

I intended going to Adare, a little town not far away, said to possess a most remarkable collection of ruins, but it was yet an hour till train time, and I spent it exploring the town back of the railway station. I found it a most picturesque collection of crooked streets and quaint houses, and my advent was frankly treated as a great event by the gossips leaning over their half-doors. How eager they were to talk; I should have liked to stop and talk to all of them; but when I got ready to take a picture of the very crookedest street, their interest in my proceedings was so urgent

and humorously-expressed that I lost my head and forgot to pull the slide—a fact I didn't realise until I had bade them good-bye and was walking away; and then I was ashamed to go back and take another.

The train for Adare was waiting beside the platform when I got to the station, and I carefully selected a vacant compartment and clambered aboard. And then a guard came along and laughingly told me I would have to get out, because that car was reserved for a "Mothers' Union," which was going to Adare to hold a meeting. So I got out and waited on the platform till the Union arrived—some twenty or thirty comfortable-looking matrons, in high spirits, which the miserable weather did not dampen in the least. Irish meetings are held, I suppose, just the same rain or shine. It was Simeon Ford who remarked that if the Scotch knew enough to go in when it rained, they would never get any outdoor exercise. This is equally true of the Irish—only in Ireland, one doesn't need to go in, for sure 'tis a soft rain that does nobody any harm!

Adare is about ten miles from Limerick and the road thither runs along the valley of the Shannon, with its lush meadows and lovely woods, veiled that day in a pearly mist of rain. As usual, the station is nearly a mile from the town, and as I started to walk it, I saw a tall old man coming along behind me, and I waited for him.

"'Tis a bad day," I said.

"It is so," he agreed; "and it's a long walk I have before me, for my house would be two miles beyont the village."

"They tell me there are some fine ruins in the village."

"There are so;" and then he looked at me more attentively. "You're not a native of these parts?" he asked, at last.

"No," I said; "I'm from America."

"From America!" he echoed, incredulously.

"Yes; from the state called Ohio."

"Think of that, now!" he cried. "And I can understand every word you say! Why, glory be to God, you speak fairer than the old woman up here along who has never crossed the road!"

I should have liked to hear more about this remarkable old woman, but he gave me no chance with his many questions about America. He had a son in New Jersey, he said, and the boy was doing well, and sent a bit of money home at Christmas and such like. It was a wonderful place, America. Ah, if he were not so old—

So, talking in this manner, we came to the town, and he pointed out the inn to me, opposite a picturesque string of thatched cottages nestling among the trees, and bade me Godspeed and went on his way; and I suppose that night before the fire he told of his meeting with the wanderer from far-off America, and how well he could understand his language!

I went on to the inn, which was a surprisingly pretty one, new and clean and well-kept; and I took off my wet coat and sat down in the cosy bar before a lunch which tasted as good as any I have ever eaten; and then I lit my pipe and drew up before the fire and asked the pretty maid who served me how to get to the ruins.

They were all, it seemed, inside the demesne of the Earl of Dunraven, the entrance to which was just across the road, and it was necessary that I should have an entrance ticket, which the maid hastened to get for me from the proprietor of the inn. When she gave it to me, I asked the price, and was told there was no charge, as the Earl of Dunraven was always glad for people to come to see the ruins.

All honour to him for that!

So it was with a very pleasant feeling about the heart that I presently crossed the road and surrendered a portion of my ticket to a black-eyed girl at the gate-house, and she told me how to go to get to the ruins, and hoped I wouldn't be soaked through. But I didn't mind the rain; it only added to the beauty of the park. Besides, I was thinking of "Silken Thomas."

Have you ever heard of "Silken Thomas," tenth Earl of Kildare? Probably not; yet he was a great man in his day—not so great as his grandfather, that greatest of the Geraldines, whose trial for treason before Henry VII is a thing Irishmen love to remember.

"This man burned the cathedral at Cashel," said the prosecutor, "and we will prove it."

"Spare your evidence," said the Earl. "I admit that I set fire to the church, but 'twas only because I thought the archbishop was inside."

"All Ireland cannot rule this man!" cried one of his opponents.

"Then, by God, this man shall rule all Ireland!" said the King, and Kildare was made lord lieutenant, and went back to Dublin in triumph.

It was in the thirteenth century that Adare came into

possession of this mighty family, and the second Earl built a great castle here, on the site of an older one which had belonged to the dispossessed O'Donovans. The first Earl had already built near by a monastery for the Augustinians; and another Earl and his pious wife built a yet handsomer one for the Franciscans; so that here was citadel and sanctuary for them, when they grew weary of fighting, or when the tide of battle went against them. It was a Kildare who led the northern half of Ireland against the southern, at the great battle of Knocktow, where Irishmen slew each other by thousands, while the English looked on and chuckled in their sleeves; and after that, the Kildares waxed so powerful that Wolsey, the great minister of the eighth Henry, took alarm at their over-vaulting ambition, and caused the head of the house, the ninth Earl, to be summoned to London. He went unwillingly, though he had been given every assurance of safety; and his misgivings proved well-founded, for he was at once imprisoned in the Tower.

He left behind him in Ireland his son, "Silken" Thomas, so-called from the richness of his attire and retinue, a youth of twenty-one; and when the news came that the old Earl had been put to death, Silken Thomas, deeming it credible enough, renounced his allegiance to England, marched into Dublin, and threw down his sword of state before the Chancellor and Archbishop in St. Mary's Abbey, and then rode boldly forth again, none daring to stop him. But it came to naught, for a great English force wore him out in a long campaign, seduced his allies from him, and finally persuaded him to yield on condition that his life should

be spared. He sailed for England, assured of a pardon, was arrested as soon as he landed, and was beheaded, and drawn and quartered on Tower Hill, together with five of his kinsmen.

So ended the haughty Geraldines. The estate was confiscated, and the castle, after being besieged by Desmonds and O'Connells, by Irish and by English, was finally taken by Cromwell's men and destroyed, and they also, perhaps, put the finishing touches to the monasteries.

That was the wild old story I was thinking of as I made my way along the winding road, over a beautiful little stream in which I could see the trout lurking, and then across a golf ground to the ivy-draped ruins of the old abbey of the Franciscans, built by the Geraldines in the heyday of their power. It is a beautiful cluster of buildings, with a graceful square tower rising high above them; and they are in excellent preservation, lacking only the roofs and a portion of gable here and there. Even the window tracery is, for the most part, intact.

The interior of the church is of unusual richness and beauty, abounding in delicate detail—recessed altar-tombs, richly-carved sedilia, arched vaults, graceful mouldings, and the window traceries are very pure and lovely. Here, as at Muckross, the cloisters are especially beautiful, and are perfectly preserved. They are lighted on two sides by pointed arches arranged in groups of three, while on the side next the church the arches are grouped in pairs, and the fourth side is closed in by a lovely arcade, with double octagonal columns. Here, also as at Muckross, the friars planted

a yew tree in the centre of the court, and it is now a venerable giant. Whether it is as deadly as the Muckross yew I do not know.

Beyond the cloisters are the refectory and domestic offices and dormitories, all well-preserved, and repaying the most careful scrutiny. I don't know when I have been more ecstatically happy than when, after examining all this beauty, I sat myself down under an arch in the very midst of it, and smoked a pipe and gazed and gazed.

I tore myself away at last, and made my way across the meadow to the ruins of the castle, which I could see looming above the trees by the river. Right on the bank of the river it stands, and at one time there was a moat all around it which the river fed. One can see traces of the moat, even yet, with a fosse beyond, and there is enough left of the castle to show how great and strong this citadel of the Geraldines was. There is a high outer wall, all battlemented, pierced by a single gate; and then an inner ward, also with a single gate, flanked by heavy defending towers. Within this looms the ultimate place of refuge, the mighty donjon, forty feet square, with walls of tremendous strength, and flanking towers, and every device for defence, so that one wonders how it was ever taken.

One can still go up by the narrow stone stair, and from the top look down upon these walls within walls, and fancy oneself back in the Middle Ages, with their pageantries and heroisms and picturesque mummeries; and one can see, too, how hard and comfortless life was then, save for the few who held wealth and power

THE CHOIR OF THE ABBEY AT ADARE

THE CASTLE OF THE GERALDINES, ADARE

in their mailed fists. "The good old times!" Not much! The sad, cruel, gruesome, selfish, treacherous old times, whose like, thank heaven, will never be seen again upon this earth!

The rain was pouring down in sheets as I left the castle, but I could not forbear going back again to the friary for a last look at it; and then I tramped happily back along the road to the gate; and the black-eyed girl was there to welcome me, and to say how sorry she was that the day was so bad. But I did not think it bad; I thought it beautiful, and said so; only I was afraid my photographs wouldn't be worth reproducing.

And then the girl asked me if I wouldn't come in and sit by the fire a bit, and we had a little gossip, of course about America. She had a married sister in New York, she said, and she hoped some day to join her. And then she told me that the cottage next door was where the famous Adare cigarettes were made—an industry started by the Earl, who grew the tobacco on his place.

I stopped in to see the factory, and found four girls rolling the cigarettes and a man blending the tobaccos. He told me that the Earl had planted twenty-five acres with tobacco, and that it did very well; but it was not used alone, as it was too dark, but blended with the lighter Maryland, brought from America. I bought a packet of the cigarettes in the interests of this narrative, but they did not seem to me in any way extraordinary.

I went on again and stopped in at the parish church, which was at one time a Trinitarian Friary, or White

Abbey, founded seven hundred years ago. It was falling into ruins, when the Earl, who seems omnipotent in these parts, restored it and fitted it up as a church and turned it over to the Catholics. There is a big school attached to it now, and as I entered the grounds, a white-coifed nun who was sitting at a window looking over some papers, fled hastily. The church itself is chiefly remarkable for a very beautiful five-lighted window over the altar. Just outside is a handsome Celtic cross, surmounting the fountain where the villagers get their water.

There was a store farther down the street, and I stopped in to get some postcards. It was the most crowded store I ever saw, the ceiling hung with tinware, the shelves heaped with merchandise of every kind, and the floor so crowded with boxes and barrels that there was scarcely room to squeeze between them. I remarked to the proprietor that he seemed to carry a large stock, and he explained that he tried to have everything anybody would want, for it was foolish to let any money get away. While we were talking, a girl came in to sell some eggs. She had them in a basket, and the man took them out, but instead of counting them, he weighed them.

I went on back to the station, after that, through the driving rain, and I was very wet by the time I got there—wet on the outside, that is, but warm and dry and happy underneath. And at the station, I found three men, who were engaged in a heated argument as to whether a man weighed any more after he had eaten dinner than he did before. One of the men contended very earnestly that one could eat the heartiest of

meals without gaining an ounce of weight if one only took the precaution of drinking a mug or two of beer or porter with the meal, since the drink lightened the brain and so neutralised the weight of the food in the stomach. He asserted that he had seen this proved more than once, and that he was willing to bet on it. He was also willing to bet that he could put twelve pennies into a brimming glass of stout without causing it to spill. As the village was a mile away, there was no place to get a glass of stout and try this interesting experiment.

And then one of the men, looking at my wet coat and dripping cap, asked me if I had been fishing.

"No," I said. "I was tramping around through the demesne looking at the ruins and trying to get some pictures of them," and I tapped my camera.

He looked at the camera and then he looked at me.

"Where would you be from?" he asked.

"From America."

"From America?" he echoed in surprise. "Ah, well," he added, after a moment's thought, "that do seem a long way to come just to get a few photos!"

I couldn't help laughing as I agreed that it did; but I had never before thought of it in just that way.

And then he told me that he had five brothers in America, but he himself had been in the army, and was minded to enlist again. In the army, one got enough to eat and warm clothes to wear and a tight roof to sleep under, which was more than most men were able to do in Ireland!

The Mothers' Union presently arrived, very wet but very happy. I was curious to know what they had

discussed at their meeting, and what conclusions they had reached, but the train pulled in a moment later, and I had no time to make any inquiries. If Betty had been along, I think I should have persuaded her to attend that meeting; but I found her very warm and comfortable before her fire back at Limerick, and I confess that I was glad to get out of my wet things and sit down in front of it.

At 9:25 o'clock that night, when we supposed that most of Limerick was in bed, we heard the sound of music and the tramp of many feet in the street below, and looked out to see a band going past, followed by a great crowd of men tramping silently along in the wet. Ordinarily, I would have rushed out to see what was up; but I was tired, and the fire felt very good, and so I sat down again in front of it. I have been sorry since, for I suspect it was a Home Rule meeting, and Limerick has a great reputation for shindies. Perhaps O'Connell, journeyman tailor, made a speech. If he did, I am sorrier still, for I am sure it was a good one!

There was one thing more at Limerick we wished to see—the great butter factory of the Messrs. Cleeve, on the other side of the Shannon. We had already seen, rumbling through the streets of Limerick, the heavy steam trams carrying enormous iron tanks, which collect the milk from the country for miles around—from ten thousand cows some one told us—and we had seen so few industries in Ireland that it seemed worth while to inspect this one. So, next morning, we walked down to the water-front, past the towering, empty warehouses, to the swing bridge which Cleeve wants to

close so that his trams can get across the Shannon without going away around by the castle.

The bridge, a very fine one, was named originally after Wellesley, but has been re-christened after Patrick Sarsfield, in whose honour the street which leads up from it is also named. The swivel which allows boats to pass and which isn't strong enough to carry the weight of Cleeve's trams, is on the Limerick side, and just beyond it is a statue which one naturally thinks is Sarsfield's, until one reads the inscription at its base and finds it is a presentment of a certain Lord Fitzgibbon, who was killed in the charge of the Light Brigade. Beyond that, the bridge stretches away across the wide and rapid stream, by far the biggest river in Ireland.

The butter factory is not far off, and we entered the office and told the clerk who came forward that we should like to see the place. He asked for my card, had me write my American address on it, and then disappeared with it into an inner room. There was a delay of some minutes, and finally one of the Messrs. Cleeve came out, my card in his hand.

After greeting us quite cordially, he looked at the camera which I had under my arm, and asked if I expected to take any pictures of the place.

"Why, no," I said; "I hadn't thought of doing so. I certainly won't if you don't want me to."

"Are you interested in the butter business?"

"Only as a private consumer."

"Or in the condensed milk business?"

"No," I said promptly, "neither of us is interested in that, even as consumers." And then, seeing that he

still hesitated, I explained that we were just travelling Americans who had heard about the factory and thought we should like to see it; but that if it was against the rules, he had only to say so, and it would be all right.

"It isn't against the rules," he explained. "In fact, we welcome visitors; only we have to be careful. We have some secret processes, especially with our condensed milk, which we wouldn't care to have our competitors know about. But I'm sure you're all right," he added, and called a clerk and told him to show us everything.

Most interesting we found it, for twenty-three million gallons of milk are used there every year, and are converted not only into butter and condensed milk, but into buttons and cigarette holders and all sorts of things for which celluloid is commonly used. It was in this use of one of the by-products of the business, casein, so our guide explained, that much of the profit was made, since both the butter and the condensed milk had to be sold on a very close margin.

The factory is a very complete one, making everything it uses—its own cans and boxes, its own labels, its own cartons, its containers of every kind and shape, as well as their contents. And the machinery with which this is done is very intricate and ingenious.

Our guide said that one of the principal hazards of the business was the likelihood that some new machine would be invented at any time to displace the old ones, and would have to be purchased in order to keep abreast of competition.

We saw the long troughs into which the milk is

poured and strained and heated to Pasteurize it, and then run through the separators. In the next room were the great churns, from which the yellow butter was being taken; and beyond were the mechanical kneaders, which worked out the superfluous water and worked in the salt; and then the butter was put through a machine which divided it into blocks weighing a pound or two pounds, and then each of these blocks was carefully weighed, to be sure that it was full weight, and if it wasn't a little dab of butter was added before it was wrapped up and placed in the carton. And during all these processes it was never touched by any human finger.

On the floor above were the great copper retorts in which the milk was being condensed by boiling. We looked in through a little isinglassed opening, and could see it seething like a volcano. And still higher up were the machines which turned the hardened casein, which would otherwise be wasted, into buttons and novelties of various kinds. The place seemed very prosperous and well-managed, and, so our guide assured us, was doing well. We were glad to find one such place in southern Ireland.

Of course there are many others; and perhaps the impression I have given of Limerick does the town injustice, for it is a busy place. It is famous for its bacon, to the making of which ten thousand pigs are sacrificed weekly. It used also to be famous for its lace, worked by hand on fine net; but Limerick lace is made almost everywhere nowadays except at Limerick, although there is a successful school there, I believe, in one of the convents.

The name of the town has also passed into the language as that of a distinctive five-line stanza, which Edward Lear made famous, and of which such distinguished poets as Rudyard Kipling, Cosmo Monkhouse, George du Maurier, Gelett Burgess and Carolyn Wells have written famous examples. The limerick is said to have been originally an extempore composition, a lot of people getting together and composing limericks, in turn, as a sort of game designed to while away an evening. Whether this was first done at Limerick I don't know, but the name came from the chorus which was sung after every stanza in order to give the next person time to get his limerick into shape:

> Oh, won't you come up, come up, come up,
> Oh, won't you come up to Limerick?
> Oh, won't you come up, come all the way up,
> Come all the way up to Limerick?

At least, that is the way I heard the chorus sung once, many years ago, without understanding in the least what it meant. The invitation, of course, is for the passing ship to enter the wide estuary of the Shannon and sail up to Limerick's waiting quays. If the first limerick was composed at Limerick, it must have been a long time ago, and I doubt if any are produced there nowadays.

We took a last stroll about the town, after we had seen the butter-making, and looked at the great artillery barracks, and the big market, and the mammoth jail and the still more mammoth lunatic asylum, where the inmates are decked out in bright red bonnets, which I should think would make them madder still. And

then we walked through an open space called the People's Park, whose principal ornament is a tall column surmounted by the statue of a man named Spring Rice. Betty remarked that she had heard of spring wheat, but never of Spring Rice, and asked who he was; but I didn't know; and then we came to the Carnegie Library, and went inside to see what it was like.

I have seldom seen a drearier place. In the reading-room a few shabby men were looking over some newspapers, but the rest of the building was deserted, except for one old man, who may have been the librarian. There were few books, and the names of those the library had were arranged in a remarkable mechanism which resembled a lot of miniature post-office boxes; and when the book was in, the name was turned out toward you, and when it was out, the card was turned blank-side out. It was the most complicated thing I ever saw in a public library. I suppose after a while, when the library gets more books, this bulletin will be used only for the newer ones; but I don't imagine there is a great demand for books in Limerick. At least mighty few seemed to be in circulation. Where life's realities are so bitter, where want is always at one's heels, there is little time for intellectual recreation.

How bitter those realities are we realised, as we had never done before, on our way back to the station; for, on the doorstep of a low, little house, sat a ragged girl of six or eight, cuddling her doll against her breast and crooning to it softly. And the doll was just a block of turf, with a scrap of dirty rag for a dress.

CHAPTER XVI

"WHERE THE RIVER SHANNON FLOWS"

I HAVE already spoken of the wonders of the River Shannon, which rises in a bubbling cauldron away above Lough Allen, and flows down through ten counties to the sea; widening into lakes twenty miles long, or draining vast stretches of impassable bog; navigable for more than two hundred miles; and, finally, the great barrier between eastern Ireland, which the Danes and English over-ran and conquered, and western Ireland, which has never ceased to be Irish, and where the old Gaelic is still the language of the people.

The most beautiful portion of the river lies between Lough Derg, at whose lower end stands the ancient town of Killaloe, and Limerick, which marks the limit of the tideway. In this twenty-mile stretch, the river, for the first and last time in its course, is crowded in between high hills, and runs swift and deep and strong. It was this stretch we started out from Limerick, that day, to explore, and our first stopping-place was Castleconnell, about halfway to Killaloe. We found it a perfect gem of a town, situated most romantically on the left bank of the river, and with one of the nicest, cleanest, most satisfactory little inns I have ever seen. It reminded us of our inn at Killarney, for it was a rambling, two-storied structure, and the resort of fishermen. Castleconnell, as the guide-book puts it, is the Utopia of Irish anglers. I can well believe it, for

the salmon we saw caught at Killarney were mere babies beside the ones which are captured here.

We made straight for the river as soon as we had divested ourselves of our luggage, down along the winding village street, past the ruins of the castle which was once the seat of the O'Briens, kings of Thomond, and which Ginkle blew up during the siege of Limerick, thinking it too dangerous a neighbour; and then we turned upstream, close beside the water's edge, for two or three miles. The exquisite beauty of every vista lured us on and on—the wide, rushing river, with its wooded banks, broken here and there by green lawns and white villas, lovely, restful-looking homes, whose owners must find life a succession of pleasant days. For this portion of the valley of the Shannon seems to me one of the real garden spots of the world.

The river was in flood, and so not at its best for fishing, but nevertheless we passed many anglers patiently whipping the water in the hope that, by some accident, a passing fish might see the fly and take it. And at last we came to the end of the river road—a place called "World's End," where we had expected to get tea. But the refreshment booth was closed and there was no sign of any one in the neighbourhood.

We were very hungry therefore, when we got back to our inn, and our high tea tasted very good indeed, served in the pleasantest of dining rooms, on a table with snowy linen and polished dishes and shining silver, and by a waiter who knew his business so well that I judged him to be French. What a pleasure that meal was, after the slovenly service of the house at Limerick, most of whose customers were commercial

travellers! Irish commercial travellers, I judge, are the least fastidious of men!

Just across the street from the inn at Castleconnell is the place where the famous Enright rods are made, and after tea we went over to take a look at them. I know nothing about rods, but any one could appreciate the beauties of the masterpieces which the man in charge showed us. And then he asked us if we wouldn't like to try one of them, and insisted on lending us his own—hurrying home after it, and stringing on the line and tying on the flies, and pressing it into my hand in a very fever of good-nature. I confess I shrank from taking it. I had a vision of some mighty fish gobbling down the fly and dashing off with a jerk that would crumple up the rod in my hands, and I tried to decline it. But he wouldn't hear of it—besides, there was Betty, her eyes shining at the prospect of fishing in the Shannon.

So I took the rod at last, and we went down to the river again, and worked our way slowly down stream, along a path ablaze with primroses, and cast from place to place for an hour or more. There were many others doing the same thing, and they all seemed to think that the fish would be sure to rise as the twilight deepened. But they didn't, and I saw no fish caught that day. This didn't in the least interfere with any one's pleasure, for your true angler delights quite as much in the mere act of fishing as in actually catching fish. But it was with a sigh of relief I finally returned the rod intact to its owner. He said that I was welcome to it any time I wanted it, but I did not ask for it again.

There were five or six fishermen staying at the hotel,

and they came in one by one, empty-handed. They had had no luck that day—the water was too high; but it was already falling, and they were looking forward to great sport on the morrow.

That morrow was a memorable one for us, also. It was a perfect day, and we set out, as soon as we had breakfasted, for the falls of Doonas and St. Senan's well, one of the most famous of the holy wells of Ireland. To get to it, it was necessary to cross the river, and the only way to get across is by a ferry, which consists of a flat-bottomed skiff, propelled by a man armed only with a small paddle. As I looked from the paddle to the mighty sweep of the river, rushing headlong past, I had some misgivings, but we clambered aboard, and the boatman pushed off.

He headed almost directly upstream, and then, when the current caught us, managed by vigorous and skilful paddling to hold his boat diagonally against it, so that it swept us swiftly over toward the other bank, and we touched it exactly opposite our point of departure. It was an exhibition of skill which I shall not soon forget.

We stepped ashore upon a beautiful meadow rolling up to a stately, wide-flung mansion, and turned our faces down the river. Already the fishermen were abroad, some of them casting from the bank, but the most out in midstream, in flat-bottomed boats like the one we had crossed in, which two men with paddles held steady in some miraculous way against the stream. One was at the bow and the other at the stern, and they did not seem to be paddling very hard, but the boat swung slowly and steadily back and forth above

any spot which looked promising, no matter how swift the current.

It grew swifter with every moment, for we were approaching the rapids, and at last we came out on a bluff overhanging them. Above the rapids, the river flows in a broad stream forty feet deep, but here it is broken into great flurries and whirlpools by the rocky bed, which rises in dark irregular masses above its surface, and the roar and the dash and the white foam and flying spray are very picturesque. For nearly a mile the tumult continues, and then the stream quiets down again and sweeps on toward Limerick and the sea.

We followed close beside it to a little inn called the "Angler's Rest," set back at the edge of a pretty garden, entered through a gate with three steps, on which were graven the words of the old Irish greeting, "Cead Mile Failte," a hundred thousand welcomes. We sat down for a time at the margin of the river and watched the changing water, and then set off to find St. Senan's well.

There are really two wells. The first is in a graveyard, a few rods away, where a fragment of an old church is still standing. It is a tangled and neglected place, with the headstones tumbled every way, and bushes and weeds running riot, but the path that leads to the well shows evidence of frequent use. The well itself is merely a small hollow in an outcropping of rock—a shallow basin, about a foot in diameter, but always miraculously full of water. I don't know how the water gets into it, or whether it is true that the basin is always full, but it certainly was that day; and

the legend is that whoever bathes his forehead in that water will never again be troubled with headache, provided that he does it reverently, with full belief, and with the proper prayers. The well is shadowed by a tall hawthorn bush, and this bush is hung thick with cheap rosaries and rags and hairpins and bits of string and other tokens placed there by the true believers who had tested the wonderful properties of the water. We tested them, too, of course, and added our tokens to the rest.

The principal well is a little farther up the road, set back in a circle of trees and approached by a short avenue of lindens. It is a far more important well than the other—is one of the most famous in Ireland, indeed—and is covered with a little shrine, which you will find pictured opposite the next page. The shrine is hung with rosaries and crowded with figurines and pictures of the Virgin and of various saints, among which, I suppose, the learned in such matters might have picked out Saint Senan, who blessed this well and gave it its miraculous power. The trees which encircle the glade in which the well stands are also hung with offerings—sacred pictures, rosaries, small vessels of gilt, and the crutches of those who came lame and halting and went away cured. On either side of the entrance is a bench where one may sit while saying one's prayers, and in front of the shrine is a shallow basin, some two feet wide and a yard long, into which the water from the well trickles, and where one may sit and wash all infirmities away. The water is held to be especially efficacious in curing rheumatism and hip disease and diseases of the joints; and I only

hope the cripples who left their crutches behind them never had need of them again.

This whole valley of the Shannon, from Killaloe to the sea, is dominated by the patron of this well, St. Senan, a holy man who died in 544, and whose life resembled that of St. Kevin, whom we have already encountered at Glendalough. Like Kevin, Senan was persecuted by the ladies, who, in all ages, have taken a peculiar delight in pursuing holy men, and he was finally driven to take refuge on a little island at the mouth of the Shannon, Scattery Island, where he hoped to be left in peace. But he was destined to disappointment, for a lady named Cannera, since sainted, followed him and asked permission to remain. This scene, of course, appealed to Tom Moore, and he enshrined it in a poem, of which this is the final stanza:

> The Lady's prayer Senanus spurned;
> The winds blew fresh, the bark returned;
> But legends hint that had the maid
> Till morning's light delayed,
> And given the Saint one rosy smile,
> She ne'er had left his lonely isle.

I do not know upon what evidence Moore bases this slander of a holy man; but, at any rate, he stayed on his island, and built a monastery and collection of little churches there for the use of the disciples who soon gathered about him, and their ruins, which much resemble those at Glendalough, even to a tall round tower, may be seen to this day. Some antiquarians hold that St. Senan is merely a personification of the Shannon; but I don't see how a personification could

THE SHANNON, NEAR WORLD'S END

ST. SENAN'S WELL

build a collection of churches. It is more satisfactory, anyway, to think of him as a person who once existed, and lived a picturesque life, and built churches and blessed holy wells, and died at a ripe age in the odour of sanctity.

We sat for a long time before his shrine, looking at the tokens and the crutches, and wishing we had been there the day they were abandoned. To be made whole by faith is a wonderful thing, whatever form the faith may take, and I should like to have seen the faces of the cripples as they felt the miracle working within them, here in this obscure place. Unlettered they no doubt were, unable to read or write perhaps, believing this flat and stable earth the centre about which the universe revolves; but they touched heights that day which such sophisticated and cynically sceptical persons as you and I can never reach.

We left the shrine, at last, and made our way back to the river, and up along it, past the rapids, to the ferry. The ferryman was watching for us, and had us back on the Castleconnell side in short order. He evidently considered the sixpence I gave him a munificent reward for the double trip.

When we got back up into the village, we found it in the throes of a great excitement over the arrival of three itinerant musicians, two of whom played cornets, while the third banged with little sticks upon a stringed instrument suspended in front of him. The cornetists paused from time to time, to make short excursions, cap in hand, in search of pennies, but the third man never stopped, but kept playing away all up the street and out of sight. We came across them

again when we walked over to the station to take the train for Killaloe; but I judge their harvest was a slender one, for the people who hung out of gates and over doors to listen to the music, disappeared promptly whenever the collectors started on their rounds.

We had a little while to wait at the station, and I got into talk with the signalman, who told me he had a brother, a Jesuit priest, in Maryland, and who wanted to hear about America, whither he hoped to be able to come some day. That it would be at best a far-off day I judged from the wistful way in which he said it.

And then he saw that I was interested in the signal-system by which the trains on his little branch were managed, and he explained it to me. For each section of the road there is a hollow iron tube, some two feet long, with brass rings around it, called a staff. The engine-driver brings one of these staffs in with him, and this must be deposited in an automatic device in the signal-house and another received from the signal-man before the train can proceed. When the staff is deposited in the machine, it automatically signals the next station and releases the staff in the machine there, ready to be given to the engineer of the approaching train. No staff, once placed in the machine, can be got out again until it is released in this way, and as no train can leave a station until its engineer has received a staff, it is practically impossible for two trains to be on the same section of road at the same time. The system is rather slow, but it is sure; and being automatic, it leaves nothing to chance, or to the vagaries of either engineer or signalman.

The bell rang, signalling the approach of our train,

the signalman carefully closed the gates across the highway which ran past the station, and a crowd of men and boys collected, to whom the arrival of the train was the most important and interesting event of the day; and then it puffed slowly in, and we climbed aboard. Killaloe is only ten miles or so from Castleconnell, but we had to change at a station called Bird Hill; and then the line ran close beside the Shannon, with lofty hills crowding down upon it, and at last we saw the beautiful bridge which spans the river, and beyond it the spires and roofs of the little town.

Not unless one knows one's Irish history will one realise what a wonderful place Killaloe is; for Killaloe is none other than Kincora, a word to stir Irish hearts, the stronghold of the greatest of Irish kings, Brian Boru. When that great chieftain fell at Clontarf, MacLiag, his minstrel, wrote a lament for him in the old Gaelic, and James Clarence Mangan has rendered it into an English version, of which this is the first stanza:

> O, where, Kincora, is Brian the Great?
> And where is the beauty that once was thine?
> O, where are the princes and nobles that sate
> At the feast in thy halls, and drank the red wine?
> Where, O, Kincora?

It was by no mere chance that Kincora, the seat of the Kings of Thomond, was situated just here, for it was this point which controlled the valley of the lower Shannon. Limerick marks the head of the tideway navigable from the sea, then come fifteen miles of rushing torrent, of fall and rapid, which no boat can pass; and then comes the long stretch of placid lake and river

over which boats may go as far as the ford of Athlone, and farther. Between Athlone and the sea, there was just one ford—a treacherous and hidden one, it is true, possible only to those who knew every step of it, but still a ford—and it was here, a little above the present town of Killaloe, where Lough Derg begins to narrow between the hills.

Brian was born here in 941. Twenty years before, the Danes had sailed in force up the Shannon and fortified the island at the head of the tideway which is now the oldest part of Limerick. They set themselves to ravage the wide and fertile valley, to sack the shrines of the churches, to exact tribute from every chieftain —nay, from every family. MacLiag, Brian's bard, author of that old epic, "The Wars of the Gael with the Gall," another Homer almost, who told the story of Danish oppression down to their final defeat at Clontarf, thus described the burden under which, in those days, the people of Ireland groaned:

"Such was the oppressiveness of the tribute and the rent of the foreigners over all Erin, that there was a king from them over every territory, a chief over every chieftaincy, an abbot over every church, a steward over every village, and a soldier in every house, so that no man of Erin had power to give even the milk of his cow, nor as much as the clutch of eggs of one hen, in succour or in kindness to an aged man, or to a friend, but was forced to keep them for the foreign steward or bailiff or soldier. And though there were but one milk-giving cow in the house, she durst not be milked for an infant of one night, nor for a sick person, but must be kept for the foreigner; and however long he might be absent from the house, his share or his supply durst not be lessened."

Brian had an elder brother, Mahon, who was king of South Munster, and dwelt at Cashel, and the two did what they could against the invaders, killing them off "in twos and in threes, in fives and in scores"; but always fresh hordes poured in, and at last Mahon grew disheartened at the seemingly endless struggle against these stark, mail-clad warriors; while as for Brian, his force was reduced to a mere tattered handful, hiding in the hills. Then it was that he and Mahon met to discuss the future.

"But where hast thou left thy followers?" Mahon asked, looking at the men, only a score in number, standing behind their chief.

"I have left them," answered Brian, "on the field of battle."

"Ah," said Mahon, sadly. "Is it so? You see how little we can do against these foreigners."

"Little as it is," said Brian, "it is better than peace."

"But it is folly to keep on fighting," said Mahon. "We can not conquer these shining warriors, clad in their polished corselets. The part of wisdom is to make terms with them, and leave no more of our men dead upon the field."

"It is natural for men to die," answered Brian calmly; "but it is neither the nature nor the inheritance of the Dalcassians to submit to injury and outrage. And yet I have no wish to lead any unwilling man to battle. Let the question of war or peace be left to the whole clan."

So it was done, and "the voice of hundreds as of one man answered for war."

Mahon abode loyally by this decision, and there

was a great muster, and a fierce battle near the spot where Limerick Junction now stands, and the Danes were routed, "and fled to the ditches, and to the valleys, and to the solitudes of that great sweet-flowery plain," and the Irish pursued them all through the night, and with the morning, came to Limerick, and stormed and took the island fortress; plundered it, and reduced it "to a cloud of smoke and red fire afterwards."

Then Mahon was murdered by some such treachery as stains so many pages of Irish history, and Brian became king of all Munster. His first work was to punish his brother's murderers, which he did with grim celerity, so that, as the chronicler puts it, they soon found that he "was not a stone in place of an egg, nor a wisp in place of a club, but a hero in place of a hero, and valour in place of valour." After that, with new energy, he turned against the Danes, and harried them and was himself harried, defeated them and was himself defeated, but fought on undaunted year after year, until the final great victory at Clontarf, where he himself was slain. And during all the years that he was king of Munster, he ruled it, not from Cashel, but from Kincora, his well-beloved castle here at the ford of the Shannon.

The ford is no longer there, for an elaborate system of sluice-gates and weirs has been constructed to hold the water back and regulate the supply to the lower reaches of the river, and one crosses to the town upon a beautiful stone bridge of thirteen arches, between which the water swirls and eddies, forming deep pools, where great salmon love to lurk. At its other end is

the town, with its houses mounting the steep slope from the river, and dominated by the square tower of its old cathedral.

It was to the cathedral we went first, and a venerable pile we found it, dating from the twelfth century, and attributed to that same Donall O'Brien, King of Munster, who built the one at Limerick. But, alas, it is venerable only from without; as one steps through the doorway, all illusion of age vanishes, for the interior has been "improved" to suit the needs of a small Church of Ireland congregation.

The Protestants in this parish are so few that the choir of the cathedral is more than ample for them; so it has been closed off from the rest of the church by a glass screen with hideous wooden "tracery"—there is a rose window (think of it!) sawed out of boards; and beyond this screen an ugly pavement of black and yellow tiles has been laid over the beautiful grey flags of the old pavement, and pews have been installed. One of the transepts is used as a robing-room; in the other an elaborate combination of steam-engine, dynamo and storage-batteries has been placed to furnish heat and light—and this, mind you, in the church which was once the royal burying-place of the Kings of Munster!

It seems foolish to maintain a great church like this for the use of so small a congregation as worships here, and yet the same thing is done all over Ireland, though it would seem to be only common sense to give the big churches to the big congregations, and to provide small churches for the small ones. But I suppose no one in Ireland would dare make such a suggestion.

I am surprised that the energetic vicar of this parish has not decided that the church is too dark and hired some workmen to knock out the lancet windows. These windows are one of its chief beauties, they are so tall, so narrow, so deeply splayed—the very earliest form, before the builders gathered courage to cut any but the smallest openings in their walls. And in the wall of the nave, blocked up and with use unexplained, is a magnificent Irish-Romanesque doorway. Tradition has it that it was the entrance to the tomb of King Murtough O'Brien, and its date is placed at the beginning of the twelfth century. The man who built it was an artist, for nothing could be more graceful than its four semi-circular arches, rising one beyond the other and covered with ornamentation—spiral and leaf work, grotesque animals with tails twined into the hair of human heads, flowers and lozenges, and the familiar dog-tooth pattern, of which the Irish were so fond.

Interesting as the church is, or would be but for the "improvements," it is far outranked by a tiny stone structure just outside—the parish church of Brian Boru himself. It is less than thirty feet long, and the walls are nearly four feet thick, and the two narrow windows which light it, one on either side, are loopholes rather than windows; and the doorway by which it is entered, narrower at the top than at the bottom, is a veritable gem; and the high-pitched roof of fitted blocks of stone is twice as high as the walls;—and on the stone slabs of its pavement Brian Boru was wont to kneel in prayer, five centuries before Columbus sailed out of Palos!

Of course I wanted a picture of this shrine; but there were difficulties, for it stands in a little depression which conceals part of it, and the high wall around the churchyard prevented my getting far enough away to get all of the high-pitched roof on the film. The caretaker, who was most interested in my manœuvres, brought a ladder at last, and I mounted to the top of the wall, and took the picture opposite the next page; but, even then, I didn't get it all.

The graveyard about these churches is a large one, but it is crowded with tombs; and the north half of it is mown and orderly, and the south half is almost impenetrable because of the rank and matted grass and weeds and nettles. This is the result of an old quarrel, more foolish than most. For, like Ireland itself, this graveyard is divided between Protestants and Catholics, the Protestants to the north and the Catholics to the south of the church; and the Protestants consider their duty done when they have cared for the graves in their own half; while the Catholics hold that, since the Protestants claim the cathedral, they are bound to look after its precincts; and the result is that the visitor to those precincts is half the time floundering knee-deep in weeds.

The most interesting tomb in the place is in the midst of this tangle, therefore a Catholic's. It bears the date 1719, and is most elaborately decorated with carved figures—one kneeling above the legend, "This is the way to Blis"; another, a man with crossed arms, inquiring, "What am I? What is man?"—two questions which have posed the greatest of philosophers. One panel bears this sestet:

How sweetly rest Christ's saints in love
That in his presence bee.
My dearest friends with Christ above
Thim wil I go and see
And all my friends in Christ below
Will post soon after me.

We left the place, at last, and walked on along the street, peeping in between the bars of an iron gate at the beautiful grounds of the Bishop's palace; and then up a steep and narrow lane to the little plateau which is now the town's market-place, but where, in the old days, Brian's palace of Kincora stood. Not a stone is left of that palace now, for the wild men of Connaught swept down from the mountains, in the twelfth century, while the English were trying to hold the castle and so control the destinies of Clare, and drove the intruders out, and tore the castle stone from stone, and threw timber and stone alike into the Shannon. Just beyond the square stands the Catholic church—a barn-like modern structure, hastily thrown together to shelter the swarming congregation, for which the cathedral would be none too large.

We went on down the hill, past the canal, with the roaring river beyond, and the purple vistas of Lough Derg opening between the hills in the distance, along an avenue of noble trees, and there before us lay a great double rath, sloping steeply to the river, built here to guard the ford. The ford lies there before it—a ford no longer, since the sluices back up the water; but in the old days this was the key to County Clare, this was the path taken by the men of Connaught in raid and foray; and here it was that Sarsfield, with four

THE BRIDGE AT KILLALOE

THE ORATORY AT KILLALOE

hundred men, followed Hogan the rapparee, on that night expedition which resulted in the destruction of the English ammunition-train. Aubrey de Vere has told the story in a spirited little poem, beginning,

> Sarsfield went out the Dutch to rout,
> And to take and break their cannon;
> To Mass went he at half past three,
> And at four he crossed the Shannon.

We had hoped to go to Athlone by way of Lough Derg, but we had already learned that that was not to be, for we had been told, back at the bridge, that the passenger service across the lake would not start until the sixteenth of June. And we were sorry, for, from the summit of this old rath, the lake, stretching away into the misty distance, looked very beautiful and inviting.

We made our way back to the village and stopped in at a nice little hotel just below the bridge, and had tea, served most appetizingly by a clean, bright-eyed maid; and then, while Betty sat down to rest, I sallied forth to see, if possible, the greatest curiosity of all about Killaloe—the original church or oratory of St. Molua, on an island near the left bank of the Shannon, about half a mile downstream.

Now to get back to St. Molua, one has to go a long way indeed, for he died three hundred years before Brian Boru was born. He was the first bishop of Killaloe, which is named after him, "cill" meaning church, and Killaloe being merely a contraction of Cill Molua, the church of Molua. The little oratory on the island, to which he retired for contemplation, after

the manner of Irish saints, was built not later than the year 600.

You will understand, therefore, why I was so eager to see it, and I went into the bar to consult with the barmaid as to the best manner of getting to it. I had been told that it was possible to reach it from the left bank of the river without the aid of a boat, but the maid assured me this could be done only when the river was low, and was out of the question in the present stage of the water. So she went to the door and called to a passing boatman, and explained my wishes, and he at once volunteered to ferry me over to the island. His house, he said, was just opposite the island, and his boat was tied up at the landing there; so we walked down to it, along the bank of the canal which parallels the river.

A little way down the canal was a mill, and a boat was tied up in front of it unloading some grain, and when I looked into the boat, I saw that the grain was shelled Indian corn! It was not from America, however, but from Russia, and my companion told me that quite a demand for cornmeal was growing up in the neighbourhood, and that it was used mixed with flour. And then he listened, his eyes round with wonder, while I told him how corn grows. He had never seen it on the ear, and did not know the meaning of the word "cob," except as applied to a horse.

"And of course you have seen bananas growing!" he said, when I had finished, and I think he scarcely believed me when I tried to explain that a country warm enough for corn might still be too cold for bananas.

We finally reached his house—a little hovel built on

a bluff overhanging the river—and went down some rude stone steps to the water's edge; and he unchained his boat, and whistled to his dog, and pushed off. It was quite an exciting paddle, for the current was very swift; but we got across to the island at last, after some hair-raising scrapings against rocks and over submerged reefs. We found the island a tangle of weeds and briars, but we broke our way through, and after some searching, found the tiny church, almost hidden by the bushes about it. They were so thick that I found it quite impossible to get a picture of the whole church, but by breaking down some of them, I finally managed to get a picture of the narrow inclined doorway, with my guide's dog posing on the threshold.

The oratory is built solidly of stone, with walls three feet thick, and a steep stone roof. Its inside measurements are ten feet by six! There is a single window, with a round head cut out of a block of stone, and in the wall on either side just below it is a shallow recess. The ceiling has fallen in, but one can still see the holes in the walls where the supporting beams rested. Above it, under the steep roof, was a croft, where perhaps the saint slept.

Consider, for a moment, what was going on in the world when this little church was built. It takes us back to the age of legend—the age of King Arthur and his knights—to that dim period when the Saxons were conquering England, and the Frankish kingdom was falling to pieces, and Mohammed was preaching his gospel in Arabia. A century and a half would elapse before Charlemagne was born, and two centuries be-

fore the first Norse boat, driving westward before the tempest, touched the New England coast!

There is, of course, a holy well on the island—the one at which St. Molua drank; and we found it after a long search, but the river was so high that it was under two or three feet of water. There were some rags and other tokens hanging on the neighbouring bushes, but not many, and I judge that few people ever come to this historic spot.

At last I was ready to go, and we climbed into the boat and started for the mainland; and once I thought we were surely going to capsize, for the boat got out of control and banged into a rock; but we finally stemmed the current, and the boatman dropped his paddle and snatched up a pole, and pushed along so close to the shore that the overhanging branches slapped us in the face, and the dog, thinking we were going to land, made a wild leap for the bank, fell short, and nearly drowned.

When we were safe again at the landing-place, and the boat tied up, I asked my companion how much I owed him for his trouble.

"Not a penny, sir," he said, warmly. "It's glad I am to oblige a pleasant gentleman like yourself."

"Oh, but look here," I protested, "that won't do," and I fished through my pockets and was appalled to find that I had only nine-pence in change. "Wait till we get back to the hotel," I said, "and I'll get some money."

"What is that you have in your hand, sir?"

"Oh, that's only nine-pence."

"That would be far too much, sir," he said; and when

ENTRANCE TO ST. MOLUA'S ORATORY

A FISHERMAN'S HOME

I hesitatingly gave it to him, he as hesitatingly took it, and I really believe he was in earnest in thinking it too much.

On our way back to the town, he expounded to me his theory of life, which was to give faithful service to one's employer, and help one's fellow-men when possible, and never bother unduly about the future, which was never as black as it looked. And I agreed with him that trouble always came butt-end first, and that, after it had passed, it frequently dwindled to a pin-point—the which has been said in verse somewhere, by Sam Walter Foss I think, but I can't put my hand on it.

We got back to Castleconnell just as the fishermen were coming in, and it was far from empty-handed they were this time. The array of salmon stretched out on the floor of the bar, when they had all arrived, was a very noble one. And everybody stood around and looked at them proudly, and told of the enormous flies that had been used, and how one monster had whipped the boat around and towed it right down through the rapids, and lucky it was that the water was high or it would infallibly have been ripped to pieces, but the boatmen kept their heads and managed to get it through, and when the salmon came out in the quiet river below and found itself still fast, it gave up and let itself be gaffed without any further fuss.

And again after dinner, we saw the familiar sight of the catch being wrapped in straw to be sent by parcel post back to England, as proof of the anglers'

prowess; and I can guess how those battles on Shannon water were fought over again when the angler got back to the bosom of his family. As for me, I have only to close my eyes to see again that noble stream sweeping along between its green, flower-sprinkled banks, foaming over the weirs, brawling past the rapids, hurrying between the quays of Limerick, and widening into the great estuary where it meets the sea.

Into the West, where, o'er the wide Atlantic,
The lights of sunset gleam,
From its high sources in the heart of Erin
Flows the great stream.

Yet back in stormy cloud or viewless vapour
The wandering waters come,
And faithfully across the trackless heaven
Find their old home.

CHAPTER XVII

LISSOY AND CLONMACNOISE

SINCE we could not get to Athlone by water, we must needs get there by rail; so, most regretfully, next morning, we bade good-bye to Castleconnell and took train for Limerick. Half an hour later, we pulled out of the Limerick terminus, circled about the town, crossed the Shannon by a long, low bridge, and were in County Clare.

Ruins are more numerous here than almost anywhere else in Ireland, for this western slope of the Shannon valley, so fertile and coveted, was famous fighting-ground. There are one or two in sight all the time, across the beautiful rolling meadows. Near Cratloe there are three, their great square keeps looming above the trees, and looking out across the wide Shannon estuary. A little farther on is the famous seat of the Earls of Thomond, Bunratty Castle, a fine old fortress, with all the approved mediæval trimmings of moat, guard-room, banqueting-hall, dungeons and torture-chamber, and I am sorry we did not get to visit it. Indeed, there are many places in the neighbourhood worth a visit—but if one is going to visit every Irish ruin, he will need ten years for the task. Only it does cause a pang of the heart to pass any of them by.

We must have passed at least fifty by, that day; but I found that the train stopped for a while at Ennis, the chief town of Clare, and I hurried out to see what

I could of it. It is certainly a picturesque place, with narrow winding streets, and queer little courts, and houses painted pink or washed with yellow ochre. I glanced in at the new Catholic cathedral, whose most impressive feature is a rather good picture of the ascension over the high altar; and then spent a few minutes among the ruins of the Franciscan friary, a queer jumble of buildings which I did not have time to untangle.

As usual, the two biggest buildings in the town are the jail and the lunatic asylum, and I passed them both on my way back to the station. Some of the lunatics were languidly hoeing a big potato patch that day, with five or six guards looking on. I have never looked up the statistics of lunacy in Ireland, but if all the asylums are full, the rate must be very high.

About half a mile beyond Ennis, the train passes a most imposing ruin, very close to the railway. It is the ruin of Clare Abbey, and is dominated by a great square tower, which must be visible for many miles around. There is still another ruin, that of Killone Abbey, only a few miles away, and for a connoisseur in ruins, Ennis would be an excellent place to spend a few days.

From Ennis, we turned almost due northward toward Athenry, and the landscape became the rockiest I have ever seen. Every little field was surrounded by a high stone wall, and as these walls did not begin to exhaust the supply, there were great heaps of rocks in every available corner—every one of them dug from the shallow soil with almost incredible labour. The fact that any one would try to reclaim such land speaks volumes for the hard necessities of the people who settled

here. I don't suppose they enjoyed the labour, but they had no choice—at least, their only choice was to wrest a living from these rocky fields or starve. No doubt many of them did starve, but the rest kept labouring on, with insect-like industry, reclaiming this corner and that, adding to the soil of their fields inch by inch.

There is an old saying that in this district, and in others like it in Connaught, the first three crops are stones, and I can well believe it. The green appearance of these hillsides is a delusion and a snare, for it is nothing but a skin of turf over the rocks, and these rocks must be dug away to the depth of two feet, sometimes, before the soil is reached. In any other part of the world, a man who would attempt to convert such a hillside into an arable field would be thought insane; here, in the west of Ireland, it is the usual thing. Most tragic of all, after it was fit for tillage, it did not belong to the man whose labour had made it so, but to his English landlord, who promptly proceeded to raise the rent!

We ran out of this rocky land, at last, and crossed a vast bog, scarred with long, black, water-filled ditches, from which the turf had been taken. There were a few people here and there cutting it, but a woman who had got into the compartment with us said that the continued wet weather had made the work very difficult and dangerous. All the people hereabouts, she added, lived by the turf cutting, at which they could earn, perhaps, ten-pence a day; but in bad seasons they were soon close to starvation. I remarked that, with such wages, they must be close to it all the time, and she

smiled sadly and said that that was true. Only, of course, in the bogs the children can work, as well as the men and women, and that helps. Indeed, we saw them many times—little boys and girls who should have been at school or running free, gaining health and strength for the hard years to come, tugging at the heavy, water-soaked blocks of peat, and laying them out in the sun to dry. It takes a month of sun to dry the peat; in wet weather it won't dry at all, and so isn't salable. Truly, the lives of the poor Irish hang on slender threads!

There are ruins of castles and monasteries and raths and cashels all through this region, and a lot of them cluster about the dirty little town of Athenry, which can boast a castle, two monasteries, city walls and an old gate. Such richness was not to be passed by, and we left the train, checked our luggage at the parcel office, fought off a jarvey who was determined to drive us to the ruins which we could see quite plainly just across the track, crossed the road by the overhead bridge, and came out in the streets of the village.

Athenry is typically Irish, with streets running every way, houses built any way, and their inhabitants leaning over the half-doors, or braced against the walls at the street corners, or going slowly about such business as they have. Life has stood still here for at least a century; and yet Athenry was once a royal town—"The Ford of the Kings" its name signifies—and a royal court was held here in the great castle, and a beautiful monastery was built near by at the express wish of St. Dominick himself, and it became a famous

place of learning, to which scholars flocked from all over Europe. Alas and alack!

> Vanished, those high conceits! Desolate and forlorn,
> We hunger against hope for that lost heritage.

For the red tide of war swept over Athenry more than once, and left it but smoking ruins. Eleven thousand Connaughtmen lay piled about the walls one summer day in 1316, all that was left of the army that tried to make Edward Bruce king of Ireland; two centuries later, when the Earls of Clanricarde swept Connaught with fire and sword, Athenry fell before them, and was left in ashes; and when it struggled to its feet again, it was only to fall before the destroying hand of Red Hugh O'Donnell, who left scarcely one stone upon another, and from that blow it never rallied.

One of the old gates still survives, well preserved in spite of war and weather, and near it is a quaint old market cross, with the Virgin and Child on one side and Christ on the other. All that is left of the thirteenth century castle is the gabled keep, looming high on a rock just back of the town, and some fragments of the battlemented curtains. All the floors have fallen in, and its four massive walls are open to the heavens. Red Hugh, when he destroyed it, did his work well!

The ruins of the abbey nestle in the shadow of the rock on which the castle stands, and we made our way down to them, along disordered streets swarming with geese, ducks, dogs, chickens and children, only to find the way closed by an iron gate, securely padlocked. But a passer-by told us that the village blacksmith had

the key, and indicated vaguely the way to his shop, which we found after some circuitous wanderings. The smith was a gnarled little man, quite the reverse of Longfellow's, and as soon as we had made our errand known, he snatched down the keys and hastened to lead the way to the ruins, leaving his work without pausing to remove his apron, and without a backward glance at his helper, who stood open-mouthed by the forge.

There were three gates to unlock before we reached the ruins, and then the blacksmith hurried back to his work, leaving his daughter to keep an eye on us. The church is all that is left of the monastery, for the domestic buildings, and even the cloisters have been swept entirely away by the rude hand of time, and the far ruder ones of the villagers who needed stone for their houses. The church itself has suffered more than most, for not only is the roof gone, but the tower and one transept and most of the window-tracery, and the whole interior has been swept by a savage storm, the tombs hacked and hewed, and the carved decorations knocked to fragments. Doubtless if we had questioned the girl who stood staring at us, she would have said that "Crummell did it," and in this case, history would bear her out, for the Puritan soldiery *did* do a lot of damage here. They and the sans-culottes suffered from the same mania—a sort of vertigo of destructiveness before memorials of kings or Catholics!

But they couldn't destroy everything, and what is left in this old church is well worth seeing, for there are some graceful pointed windows, and six narrow lancets in a lovely row along the north wall of the choir, and a fine arcade in the north transept, and many de-

THE CHOIR OF THE ABBEY AT ATHENRY

A COTTAGE AT ATHENRY

tails of decoration beautiful in spite of mutilation. The place is crowded with tombs, for this was the burial place of the Dalys and the Lynchs and the De Burgos, and is still in use as such. The tomb of the "noble family of De Burgh" is in one corner, and there are many mural tablets, with inscriptions in French and Latin and Gaelic, as well as English. In fact one of them announces in French and Latin and English, presumably so that every one except the Irish might read, that "here is the antient Sepulchre of the Sept of the Walls of Droghty late demolished by the Cromellians."

We went back through the town, at last, and while I was manœuvring for the picture opposite page 270, Betty got into talk with a girl who was leaning over a half-door, and found, marvellous to relate, that she had once lived in Brookline, Mass. We asked her why she had come back to Ireland, and after a moment's thought she said it was because "America wasn't fair." We thought of aristocratic Brookline, the abode of millionaires, and then we looked about us—at the ragged donkey standing across the way, at the pig wandering down the middle of the dirty street, at the low little houses and the shabby people—and perhaps we smiled, but be sure it was in sympathy, not in derision.

We crossed over to the railway hotel, finally, and had lunch, and when we came out, the woman who managed the place waylaid us at the front door for a chat. She told us of a woman from the village who was on the *Titanic*, but was saved, and discussed various scandals in high life, which she had gleaned from

the half-penny press; and then we spoke of the girl we had met in the village, and she deplored the high-and-mighty airs which some of the girls who come home from America give themselves.

"But I once heard one of them put well in her place," she added, "when she came back with her hat full of flowers and her petticoat full of flounces, and walked about the town as though we were all dirt beneath her feet. Well, one day an old man stopped her for a word, a friend of the family who wished her well, but she put up her nose at him—and perhaps he was not very clean—and was for going past. But he put out his hand and caught her by the arm. 'You're after bein' a fine lady now,' says he, 'but I mind the time, and that but a few years since, when I've seen ye sittin' on your bare-backed ass, with your naked legs hangin' down—yes, and I can be tellin' ye more than that, if so be ye wish to hear it!' She didn't stay long in the village after that," added the speaker, with a chuckle of relish.

Our train came along, presently, and we were soon running over as dreary, bleak and miserable a land as any we had seen in Ireland. Vast boggy plains, bare rocky hillsides, with scarcely a house to be seen anywhere—only a ruin, now and then, marking the site of some ancient stronghold; and so, in the first dusk of the evening, we came to Athlone.

One would have thought that, with so important a town, the station would have been placed somewhere near it; but habit was too strong for the builders of the line, and so they put the station about a mile away, at the end of a dreary stretch of road, beyond a great

barrack, along the river, past the castle, and over the bridge.

Athlone has been famous for its widows ever since the days of Molly Malone, ohone! who

> Melted the hearts
> Of the swains in them parts;

and we found that the best hotel in the place, which was not as good as it might have been, was managed by a widow, who might well have posed for the lovely Molly. She had not been a widow long, and I judged would not be if the swains of the town had any voice in the matter, for the bar was very popular when she was behind it.

We went out, after dinner, to see the town, and found it one of the most ugly and depressing we had yet encountered—a sort of cross between a town and a village, but with the attractions of neither. The water-front is its most interesting part, for a fragment of the old castle which was built to guard the second of the all-important fords of the Shannon still stands there. Kincora, you will remember, guarded the other. But Kincora was three days' march to the southward; and for two days' march to the northward there was no other place where the Shannon could be crossed; and so here at the ford just below Lough Ree, in the old days, a franklin named Luan set up a rude little inn, and the place came to be known as Ath Luan, Luan's Ford—Athlone. Here in the year 1001, hostages were sent from all Ireland to meet Brian Boru and proclaim him High King; and here, a century later, the O'Conors built a rath and a tower to guard the ford and levy

tribute upon all who used it. In another hundred years, the Normans had seized it, and put up the strong, round-towered castle, parts of which still remain; and for seven centuries after that, the English power "sat astride the passage of Connaught," save for the brief time, after the battle of the Boyne, it was held by the Irish. But Ginkle captured it, as he was soon to capture Limerick, and a few years later, most of what was left of the town was destroyed when the magazine of the castle blew up during a thunderstorm.

But though there is little in Athlone to delay the visitor, there are two places in the neighbourhood worth seeing. Nine miles to the north is Lissoy, made immortal by Goldsmith as

> Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;

and ten miles to the south, on the bank of the Shannon, are the ruins of Clonmacnoise, whither, twelve centuries ago, men in search of knowledge turned their faces from all the corners of Europe.

It was for Lissoy we started next morning, on a car for which I had bargained the night before. Our jarvey was a loquacious old fellow, who talked unceasingly, but in so broken a brogue that it was only with the greatest difficulty we could follow him. He had known some people who had gone down on the *Titanic*, and he told us all about them; but most of his talk was a lament for the hard times, the sorrowful state of the country, the paucity of tourists, and the vagaries of the landlady, of whom he spoke in the most mournful and pessimistic way. She was not, I gathered,

a native of Athlone, but a Dublin woman whose ideas were new-fangled and highfalutin, and who, I inferred, did not look kindly upon the careless habits of her "help."

The road lay through a pleasant, rolling country, with glimpses of Lough Ree to the left, and on a hill to the right a tall shaft which our jarvey told us marked the exact centre of Ireland. When one looks at the map, one sees that it is at least somewhere near the centre. But it has been explained to other passers-by in many ways: as the remains of a round tower, as a tower which a rich man built in order to mount to the top of it every day to count his sheep, as a pole for his tent put up by Finn MacCool, as a wind-mill in the old days, and as a dozen other things—anything, in fact, that happened to occur to the man who was asked the question. One answer, you may be sure, he never made, and that was that he didn't know!

There *are* some remains of old windmills in the neighbourhood—we saw one or two on near-by hillsides, close enough to recognise them; and if I had known at the time what a divergence of opinion there was about that lonely tower in the distance, I would have driven over to it and investigated it on my own hook. But our jarvey's answer was so positive that it left no room for doubt, so we drove on through a village of tiny thatched houses, with the smoke of the turf giving a pleasant tang to the air; then up a long hill, to the left at a cross-roads, and at last our jarvey drew up before a five-barred gate. We looked at him questioningly, for there was no village in sight.

"'Tis here it was, sir," he said, "sweet Auburn, the

loveliest village of the plain. 'Twas up that path yonder the village preacher's modest mansion rose, though there is little enough left of it now; and over yonder, behind that wall with the yellow furze atop it, unprofitably gay, was where the village master taught his little school, and there is nothing at all left of that; and a little furder on is the 'Three Jolly Pigeons,' where news much older than the ale went round."

I looked at him wonderingly.

"Where did you pick up all that patter?" I asked.

He snickered.

"Ah, you would not be the first gintleman I have driven out here, sir," he explained; "and many of them would be speakin' parts of the poem."

"I suppose ale is still to be obtained at the 'Three Jolly Pigeons'?"

"It is, sir, if so be your honour would be wantin' some. And they have one of the big stones of the old mill for a doorstep," he added, as an extra inducement not to pass it by.

We got down from our seats, went through the gate, and up the path which Goldsmith and his father trod so many times; for, whether or not Lissoy was really Auburn, there can be no doubt that the elder Goldsmith was really vicar here, and that he lived in the house, the rectory of Kilkenny West, of which only a fragment of the front wall remains, and that Oliver was a boy here. The ash trees which shadowed the path have disappeared, but there are still plenty of gabbling geese around, and a file of them went past as I took a picture of the remnant of the rectory. A shed

THE GOLDSMITH RECTORY AT LISSOY

THE "THREE JOLLY PIGEONS"

with a hideous roof of corrugated iron has been built behind it, and near by is a two-storied house where the present tenant lives. We found an old woman, for all the world like Goldsmith's "widowed, solitary thing," carding wool in an outhouse, and she showed us the old well, deep in the ground, walled around and approached by a steep flight of steps.

There was nothing more to see, so we went back to the gate, escorted by three friendly pigs, and clambered up to our seats again, and looked out over the valley. There is nothing in that valley but gently-rolling pastures, and nothing lives there now but sheep and cattle. And it sends a chill up the spine to realise that once a village stood there, and that it has melted away into the earth. Not a stone is left of its houses, not a sod of its walls, not a flower of its gardens.

But that village was Lissoy, not Auburn. No such village as Auburn ever existed in Ireland, where the young folks sported on the village green, and the swain responsive to the milkmaid sung, and the village master taught his school during the day, and argued with the preacher in the evening, and a jolly crowd gathered every night at the inn to drink the nut-brown ale. There is not a single Irish detail in that picture; it is all English, just as Goldsmith intended it should be, for it was of "England's griefs" he was writing, not of Ireland's. In that day, few people here in Westmeath spoke anything but Irish; the village children knew nothing of schools, except hedge-row ones, taught by some fugitive priest; the "honest rustics" had no "decent churches," but only hidden caves in dark valleys, where Mass was said secretly and at the risk of

life; and, rest assured, when any inhabitant of this valley had money to spend for drink, he wasted it on no such futile beverage as nut-brown ale!

I am sure that little of it is sold to-day at the "Three Jolly Pigeons," where we presently arrived, a low wayside tavern with thatched roof and plastered wall, kept by John Nally, who welcomed us most kindly, and grew enthusiastic when I proposed to take a picture. There was a rickety donkey-cart standing by the door, and its owner came out to be in the picture, too—raggeder even than his donkey, disreputable, dirty, gin-soaked, and with only a jagged tooth or two in his expansive mouth, but carefree and full of mirth.

Betty, who had been admiring the supreme raggedness of the donkey, asked its name.

"Top o' the Mornin', miss," answered the man, with a shout of laughter, and I am sure the name was the inspiration of the moment.

And then, while our jarvey drank his whiskey, I had a talk with Mr. Nally, who, of course, for reasons of trade perhaps, is firmly of the belief that Auburn is Lissoy and no other. And he told me of another poet who was born down on the banks of the Inny, a mile or two away, and who, in the old days, spent many an evening at the Pigeons—Johnny Casey he called him, and it turned out to be that same John Keegan Casey, who wrote "The Rising of the Moon," and "Maire my Girl," and "Gracie og Machree," and "Donal Kenny,"—Irish subjects all, and most of them local ones, as well. Donal Kenny, for instance, was a bold blade, a clever hand with the snare and the net, who turned the heads of all the girls in the neighbourhood,

and broke those of most of the boys, until it was glad they were when he went off with himself to America. I have looked up the poem since, and I fear that Casey enveloped the parting scene with exaggerated sentiment; yet the verses have a swing to them:

> Come, piper, play the "Shaskan Reel,"
> Or else the "Lasses on the Heather,"
> And, Mary, lay aside your wheel
> Until we dance once more together.
> At fair and pattern oft before
> Of reels and jigs we've tripped full many;
> But ne'er again this loved old floor
> Will feel the foot of Donal Kenny.

We tore ourselves away, at last, taking a road which ran along the border of the lake—a beautiful sheet of bluest water, dotted with greenest islands, with the rolling plains of Roscommon rising beyond. And then, from the top of a long hill, we saw below us the spires of Athlone, and soon we were rattling down into the town.

That morning, while looking through our guide-book, we had encountered a sentence which piqued our curiosity. It was this:

> "Some of the walls of St. Peter's Abbey remain, in which can be seen one of those curious figures called 'Sheela-na-gig.' "

I remembered dimly that, back at Cashel, John Minogue had called our attention to a grotesque figure with twisted legs and distorted visage carved on a stone, and had called it something that sounded like

Sheela-na-gig; but I wasn't sure, and so we started out blithely to find this one.

Right at the start, we met with unexpected difficulties, for nobody at the hotel, not even the ancient jarvey, had ever heard of the Sheela-na-gig. The barmaid, however, said that St. Peter's Abbey was on the other side of the river, past the castle, so we went over there, and found that part of the town much more dilapidated and picturesque than the more modern portion on the Westmeath side. We wandered around for quite a while, asking the way of this person and that, and finally we wound up at St. Peter's church, a new structure and one singularly uninteresting. It was evident that there was no Sheela-na-gig there; and at this point Betty surrendered, and went back to the hotel to write some letters.

But I had started out on the quest of the Sheela-na-gig, and I was determined to find it. I thought possibly it might be somewhere among the ruins of the Franciscan Abbey, which stand close to the other side of the river, so I crossed the river again, and after walking about a mile along a high wall through a dirty lane, reached a gate, only to find it locked. There was a man inside, raking a gravelled walk, but he said nobody was admitted to the ruins, and anyway he was quite positive that there was no such thing as a Sheela-na-gig among them. He added that a portion of the ruins had been torn down to make room for an extension of the Athlone Woolen Mills, and perhaps they had the Sheela-na-gig there.

I had no faith in this suggestion, but for want of something better to do, I turned in at the office of the

mills, and was warmly welcomed by the manager, who invited me to inspect the place. It is an exceedingly rambling and haphazard structure, but it gives employment to hundreds of people, mostly girls and women, whose pale faces and drooping figures bore testimony to the wearing nature of the work. The mill gets the wool in the raw state, straight from the grower, and the processes by which it is cleaned and carded and spun into thread, and dyed, and woven into cloth, and inspected, and weighed, and finally rolled up ready for the market, are many and intricate. The manager told me that the mill turned out thirty thousand yards of tweed a week, and he hoped to turn out even more, as soon as a reduction of the tariff permitted him to get into the American market. Even with a duty of forty-five per cent., he could compete with American tweeds, and with a lower duty he could undersell them.

It needed only a glance at the shabby, toil-worn men and women working in his factory to understand why this was true. I didn't ask him what wages his women earned, but I *did* ask as to their hours of labour. They go to work at 6:30 in the morning and work till six in the evening, with a three-quarter hour interval for breakfast and the same for lunch. I saw groups of them, afterwards, strolling about the streets in the twilight, and sad and poor and spiritless they looked. Yet they are eager for the work, for at least it keeps them alive, and one can scarcely blame the manager for sticking to the market price, and so doing his best to meet a remorseless competition. I confess that such economic problems as this are too stiff for me.

As I was about to leave, I casually mentioned my

search for the Sheela-na-gig—and he knew where it was! It was over on the other bank, it seemed, not far from the river-front, and he directed me with great detail how to get to it; but, alas, in such a town of crooked streets, definite direction was impossible. However, with hope springing eternal, I crossed the bridge a third time, turned up-stream close beside the river, wandered into a board-yard, extricated myself, got into a blind alley that ended in a high wall and had to retrace my steps; asked man after man, who only stared vacantly and shook their heads; and finally found a boy who knew, and who eagerly left his work to conduct me to the spot.

Imagine with what a feeling of triumph I stood at last before the Sheela-na-gig!

It is carved over the wide arch of the entrance to what was once an abbey, but what I think is now a laundry—an impish, leering figure, clasping its knees up under its chin, and peering down to see who passes. Underneath the imp are the words "St. Peter's Port," and underneath the words is a grotesque head. On either side of the arch is a sculptured plaque, that to the left bearing the words "May Satan never enter," and that to the right, "Wilo Wisp & Jack the Printer," —the two, of course, forming a couplet.

While I was staring at these remarkable inscriptions and trying to puzzle out some meaning for them, an old woman, who had been watching me with interest from the door of her house, came out and tried to tell me the history of the gate. But she spoke so incoherently that I could make nothing of it beyond the fact that the inscriptions originated in two men's ri-

valry for possession of the property; so somebody else will have to untangle that legend.

A little way up the street there was a shop which, among other things, had post-cards displayed for sale, and I stopped in, thinking I might get a picture of the gate and perhaps learn something more of its story. But when I asked for such a card, the proprietor stared at me in amazement.

"There is no such gate hereabouts," he said.

"But there is," I protested; "right there at the end of the street. Do you mean to say you have never seen the Sheela-na-gig, nor read that line about Wilo Wisp and Jack the Printer?"

He rubbed his head dazedly.

"I have not," he admitted. "Look at that, now," he went on; "here have I been going past that gate for years, and you come all the way from America and see more in one minute than I have seen in me whole life!"

Then he asked me if I had been up on top the castle, which was just opposite his shop, and I replied that I had not.

"Nor have I," he said; "but I am told there is a grand view from up there."

"Why not go up with me now?" I suggested.

"I might," he agreed; and then he looked at the tall keep of the castle and shook his head. "'Tis not to-day I can be doing it; you see, I must stay with the shop."

So I left him there, and essayed the heights of the castle by myself. Only for a little way, however, was I by myself, for some families connected with the garrison live there, and they are all prolific; so I soon

found myself surrounded by a horde of ragged children, who begged for ha'pennies in the queer bated voice which seems to go with begging in Ireland. I distributed a few, but that was a mistake; for when they found I not only had some ha'pennies but was actually willing to part with them, they grew almost ferocious; I said "Oppenheimer!" in vain, and I was only saved at last by a husky woman who issued forth from one of the towers and swept down upon them, vi et armis, and drove them headlong out of sight. She was red-headed and curious, and she stopped for a bit of talk. (I pass over the part about America.)

"How do you like living in the old castle?" I asked her, finally.

"Sure, 'tis a grand place, sir."

"Do you ever see any ghosts?"

"Ghosts? Niver a one, sir."

"Nor hear any banshees?"

"Banshees is it? Sure, they niver come to this place, sir, 'tis that healthy, bein' so high."

And it must, indeed, be healthier than the narrow, gloomy, squalid streets below. I could look down into them from the top of the tower, to which I presently mounted, and see their swarming life—men and women idling about, a girl drawing water from the public pump, a boy skinning some eels at the corner, small children playing in the gutters. On the other side lay the river, empty save for a few small launches, and beyond it the roofs of the newer part of the town, and beyond the town the beautiful Westmeath hills.

Just at my feet was the bridge across the Shannon, connecting east and west Ireland. It is a modern one,

but it stands on the site of the old one, built while Elizabeth was queen, and the scene of a desperate conflict when Ginkle stormed the town. Of the castle itself, only the keep is old. The drum-towers, which frown down upon the river, are of later date, though one would never suspect it to look at them; but when one gets to the top of them, one finds embrasures for artillery, and the approach is up a graded way along which the guns can be taken. The old drawbridge and portcullis which guarded the entrance to the keep are still in place, but there is little else of interest.

The ruins of the ancient abbey of Clonmacnoise lie close beside the Shannon, some ten miles below Athlone, and the road thither winds through a rolling country down to the broad river, which here flows lazily between flat banks. One would expect so noble a stretch of water to be crowded with commerce, but it was quite empty that morning, save for an occasional rude, flat-bottomed punt, loaded high with turf, which a man and a boy would be poling slowly upstream toward Athlone.

It was a desolate scene; and Clonmacnoise looked desolate, too, with its gaunt grey towers, and huddle of little buildings, and cluttered graveyard. It seemed incredible that this obscure corner of the world was once a centre of learning toward which scholars turned their faces from the far ends of Europe, to which Charlemagne sent gifts, and within whose walls princes and nobles were reared in wisdom and piety. Yet such it was—the nearest to being a national university among all the abbeys, for it was not identified with any

class or province, but chose its abbots from all Ireland, and welcomed its students from all the world.

The abbey was founded by St. Kieran in 548. St. Kieran belonged to what is known as the Second Order of Irish Saints, founders of monasteries and of great co-operative communities, as distinguished from the First Order—St. Patrick and his immediate successors —who were bishops and missionaries and founders of churches, and the Third Order, who were hermits, dwelling in desert places, often in small stone cells, just as St. Molua did in his little cell near Killaloe. St. Kieran had already started an abbey on an island in Lough Ree, but grew dissatisfied with it, for some reason, and he and eight companions got on board a boat and floated down the river, rejecting this place and that as not suited to their purpose, and finally reaching this sloping meadow, where their leader bade them stop.

"Let us remain here," he said, "for many souls will ascend to heaven from this spot."

So the abbey was started, and, though Kieran himself died in the following year, it grew rapidly in importance. Let me try to picture the place as it was then. The students lived in small huts crowded about the precincts; the classes were held in the open air; only for purposes of worship were permanent buildings built. Here, as at Glendalough, there was not one large church, but seven small ones; and the students seem to have attended divine service in the groups in which they studied. It was a self-supporting community, tilling its own lands, spinning its own wool, weaving its own cloth, and building its own churches; and its life, while not austere, was of the simplest.

The students, at times, numbered as many as three thousand. The teaching was free, but from every student a certain amount of service was required in the interest of the community. The principal study, of course, was that of religion, but from the very first the heathen classics and the Irish language, arithmetic, rhetoric, astronomy and natural science were taught side by side with theology.

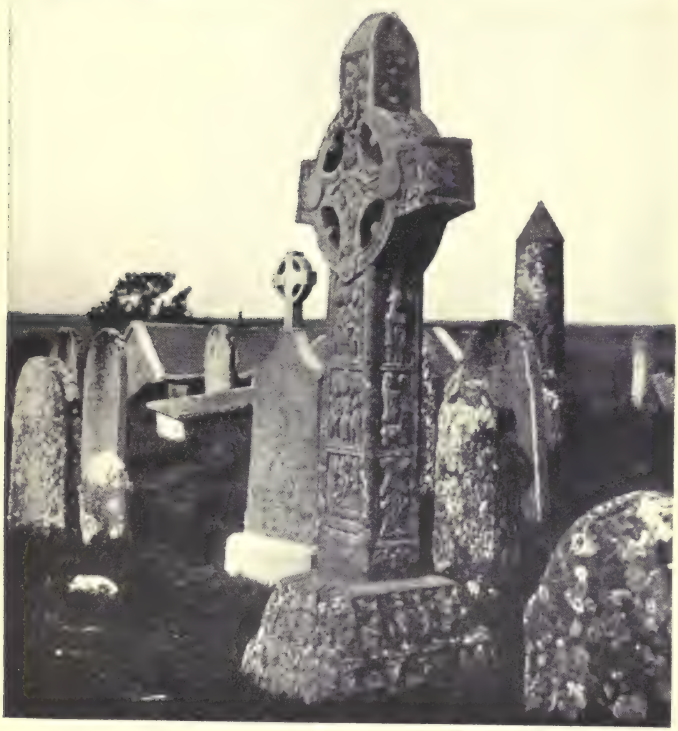
The life at Clonmacnoise was typical of that at all the other monastic schools with which Ireland was then so thickly dotted; and it is the more interesting because the whole continent of Europe, at that time, was groping through the very darkest period of the Middle Ages. Culture there was at its lowest ebb—knowledge of Greek, for instance, had so nearly vanished that any one who knew Greek was assumed at once to have come from Ireland, where it was taught in all the schools. Those schools sent forth swarms of missionaries, "the most fearless spiritual knights the world has known," to spread the light over Europe; they established centres at Cambrai, at Rheims, at Soissons, at Laon, at Liége; they founded the great monastery at Ratisbon; they built others at Wurzburg, at Nuremberg, at Constanz, at Vienna—and then came the Vikings, and put an end to Irish learning. For the Vikings were Pagans, and the shrines of the churches, the treasuries of the monasteries and schools, were the first objects of onslaught.

For two centuries, the Danes made of Ireland "spoil-land and sword-land and conquered land, ravaged her chieftaincies and her privileged churches and her sanctuaries, and rent her shrines and her reliquaries and

her books, and demolished her beautiful ornamented temples—in a word, though there were an hundred sharp and ready tongues in each head, and an hundred loud, unceasing voices from each tongue, they could never enumerate all the Gael suffered, both men and women, laity and clergy, noble and ignoble, from these wrathful, valiant, purely-pagan people." The Danes aimed to destroy all learning, which they hated and distrusted, and they very nearly succeeded.

I have already told how, under Brian Boru, the Irish drew together, and finally managed to defeat the Danes at Clontarf; and for a century and a half after that, ancient Erin seemed rising from her ashes. The books destroyed by the Danes were re-written, churches and monasteries rebuilt, schools re-opened—and then came Strongbow at the head of his Normans, and that dream was ended. There was civilisation in Ireland after that, but it was a civilisation dominated by England; there was education, but not for the native Irish; there were great monasteries, but they were built by French or Norman monks—by Franciscans or Cistercians or Augustinians; and finally even these were swept away with the coming of the Established Church.

I shall not attempt to describe the ruins of the seven churches of Clonmacnoise, except to say that, though they are all small, they are crowded with interesting detail; and there are two round towers, somewhat squat and rude, as a witness to the danger of Danish raiders; but the glory of the place is the magnificent sculptured cross, erected a thousand years ago over the grave of Flann, High King of Erin, and still standing as a



ON THE ROAD TO CLONMACNOISE

ST. KIERAN'S CATHAIR, CLONMACNOISE

witness to Irish craftsmanship. It is ten feet high, cut from a single block of stone, and elaborately carved from top to bottom, and its date is fixed by an Irish inscription which can still be deciphered: "A prayer for Colman who made this cross on the King Flann." It was Flann who built the largest of the stone churches, near which the cross stands, about 909, and at that time Colman was Abbot of Clonmacnoise. Flann died five years later, and Colman honoured his memory with this magnificent tribute.

Its maker's name is lost, but there can be no doubt he was a great artist. On one side he has represented scenes from the founding of Clonmacnoise, and on the other scenes from the Passion of the Saviour. The crucifixion, as usual, is depicted at the intersection, while hell and heaven are shown on the arms themselves, crowded with the damned or the blessed, as the case may be. There is another cross in the graveyard scarcely less interesting, though no one knows on whose grave it stands, and there is the shaft of a third. And all about them are crowded the lichened tombstones marking the graves of the fortunate ones who won sepulture in St. Kieran's cathair, and who, on the last day, will be borne straight to heaven with him.

For this enclosure was once the very holiest in Ireland. It was here that Kieran was laid, and then his prophecy was remembered that many souls would ascend to heaven from this spot; and the belief gradually grew that no one interred "in the graveyard of noble Kieran" would ever be adjudged to damnation. In consequence, so many people wanted to be buried there that there wasn't room for all of them,

and in the end, even powerful kings and princes were forced to contend with great gifts for a place of sepulture. Here Flann was laid; and hither was borne the body of Rory O'Conor, the last who claimed the kingship of all Ireland, after his death at Cong. The great abbey at Cong served well enough as the retreat for his declining years, but it was only at Clonmacnoise, in the sacred cathair of Kieran, that he would be buried. And, as I closed the chapter on the Shannon with some verses of one of Ireland's truest poets, I cannot do better than close this one with his lovely rendering of the lament which Enock O'Gillan wrote many centuries ago for

THE DEAD AT CLONMACNOISE

In a quiet-watered land, a land of roses,
Stands St. Kieran's city fair,
And the warriors of Erin in their famous generations
Slumber there.

There beneath the dewy hillside sleep the noblest
Of the clan of Conn,
Each below his stone with name in branching Ogham
And the sacred knot thereon.

There they laid to rest the seven kings of Tara,
There the sons of Cairbré sleep—
Battle-banners of the Gael that in Kieran's plain of crosses
Now their final hosting keep.

And in Clonmacnoise they laid the men of Teffia,
And right many a lord of Bregh;
Deep the sod above Clan Creidé and Clan Conaill,
Kind in hall and fierce in fray.

Many and many a son of Conn the Hundred-fighter
In the red earth lies at rest;
Many a blue eye of Clan Colman the turf covers,
Many a swan-white breast.

CHAPTER XVIII

GALWAY OF THE TRIBES

It was in the dusk of early evening that our train started westward from Athlone, and we soon found ourselves traversing again the dreary bogs which we had crossed on our way from Athenry. I have seldom seen a more beautiful sunset than the one that evening, and we watched the changing sky and the flaming west for long hours; and then, just as darkness came, the great reaches of Galway Bay opened before us, and we were at our journey's end—Galway of the Tribes, the beautiful old town which is the gateway to Connemara.

There is a good hotel connected with the railway, and we had dinner there, and then went forth to see the town. We were struck at once by its picturesqueness, its foreign air. The narrow curving streets do not somehow look like Irish streets, nor do the houses look like Irish houses; rather might one fancy oneself in some old town of France or Belgium. We were fascinated by it, and wandered about for a long time, along dim lanes, into dark courts, looking at the shawled women and listening to the soft talk of the strolling girls.

Nobody knows certainly how Galway got its name. Some say it was because a woman named Galva was drowned in the river; others maintain that the name was derived from the Gallæci of Spain, who used to

trade here; and still others think that it came from the Gaels, who eventually occupied it in the course of their conquest of Ireland. Whatever the origin of the name, the town was but a poor place, a mere trading village of little importance, until the English came. Richard de Burgo was granted the county of Connaught by the English king in 1226, and six years later he entered Galway, rebuilt and enlarged the castle which had been put up by the Connaught men, threw a wall around the town, and so established another of those centres of Norman power, which were soon to overshadow the whole of Ireland. It was a very English colony, at first, with a deep-seated contempt for the wild Irish. Over the west gate, which looked toward Connemara, was the inscription,

FROM THE FURY OF THE O'FLAHERTIES
GOOD LORD DELIVER US.

and one of the by-laws of the town was that no citizen should receive into his house at Christmas or on any other feast day any of the Burkes, MacWilliamses, or Kelleys, and that "neither O' nor Mac shalle strutte ne swaggere thro the streetes of Gallway."

The years wore away this animosity, as they have a fashion of doing in Ireland, and by Cromwell's time, the citizens of the town had become so Irish that they were contemptuously called "the tribes of Galway" by the Puritan soldiers. But, as was the case of the Beggars in Holland, a name given in contempt was adopted as a badge of honour, and the "Tribes of Galway" became a mark of distinction for men who had suffered and fought and had never been conquered. There were

thirteen of these tribes; and the Blakes and Lynches and Joyces and Martins who still form the greater part of the old town's population are their descendants—but how fallen from their high estate!

For many years, Galway had a practical monopoly of the trade with Spain, there was always a large Spanish colony here, and it is to this long-continued intercourse that many persons attribute the foreign air of the town. I have even seen it asserted that the people are of a decided Spanish type; but we were unable to discern it, and I am inclined to think the Spanish influence has been much exaggerated. Its period of prosperity ended with the coming of the Parliamentary army, which took the place and plundered it; and the final blow was struck forty years later, when the army of William of Orange, fresh from its victories to the east, laid siege to it and captured it in two days. The old families found themselves ruined, trade utterly ceased, the great warehouses fell to decay, and the mansions of the aristocracy, no longer able to maintain them, were given over to use as tenements. There is to-day about Galway an air of ruin and decay such as I have seen equalled in few other Irish towns; but there are also some signs of reawakening, and it may be that, after three centuries, the tide has turned.

We found the streets crowded, next morning, with the most picturesque people we had seen anywhere in Ireland, for it was Saturday and so market day, and the country-folk had gathered in from many miles around. The men were for the most part buttoned up in cut-

aways of stiff frieze, nearly as hard and unyielding as iron; and the women, almost without exception, wore bright red skirts, made of fuzzy homespun flannel, which they had themselves woven from wool dyed with the rich crimson of madder. The shaggier the flannel, the more it is esteemed, and some of the skirts we saw had a nap half an inch deep. They are made very full and short, somewhat after the fashion of the Dutch; but the resemblance ended there, for most of these women were barefooted, and strode about with a disregard of cobbles and sharp paving-stones which proved the toughness of their soles.

Galway, as well as most other Irish towns, boasts a number of millinery stores, with windows full of befeathered and beribboned hats; but one wonders where their customers come from, for hats are a luxury unknown to most Irish women, who habitually go either bareheaded, or with the head muffled in a shawl. All the women here in Galway were shawled, and beautiful shawls they were, of a delicate fawn-colour, and very soft and thick.

We went at once to the market, and found the country women ranged along the curb, with great baskets in front of them containing eggs and butter and other products of the farm. How far they had walked, that morning, carrying these heavy burdens, I did not like to guess, but we met one later who had eight miles to go before she would be home again. A few had carts drawn by little grey donkeys; and the old woman in one of these was so typical that I wanted to get her picture. She was sitting there watching the crowd with her elbows on her knees, and a chicken in her hands,

but when she saw me unlimbering my camera, she shook her head menacingly.

There was a constable in the crowd, and he offered to clear the bystanders away, so that I could get a good picture of her. I remarked that she seemed to object, and he said that he didn't see why that made any difference, and that it wouldn't do her any harm. But I preferred diplomacy to force, and finally I asked a quaint-looking old man standing by if I might take his picture.

"Ye may, and welcome," was the prompt response.

So I stood him up in front of the cart and got my focus.

"Will ye be seein' the ould saftie!" cried the woman. "Look at the ould saftie standin' there to get his picter took." And she went on to say other, and presumably much less complimentary things, in Irish; but my subject only grinned pleasantly and paid no heed. If you will look at the picture opposite this page, you can almost see the scornful invectives issuing from her lips. My subject was very proud indeed when I promised him a print; and I hope it reached him safely.

Eggs are sold by the score in Galway, and the price that day was one shilling twopence, or about twenty-eight cents—which is not as cheap as one would expect them to be in a country where wages are so low. But perhaps it is only labour that is cheap in Ireland!

One row of women were offering for sale a kind of seaweed, whose Celtic name, as they pronounced it, I could not catch, but which in English they called dillisk; a red weed which they assured us they had gathered from the rocks along the beach that very morning,

THE MARKET AT GALWAY

"OULD SAFTIE"

and which many people were buying and stuffing into their mouths and chewing with the greatest relish. It did not look especially inviting, but the women insisted, with much laughter, that we sample it, and we finally did, somewhat gingerly. The only taste I detected in it was that of the salt-water in which it had been soaked; but it is supposed to be very healthy, and to be especially efficacious in straightening out a man who has had a drop too much. No matter how tangled his legs may be, so the women assured us, a few mouthfuls of dillisk will set him right again; and no man with a pocketful of dillisk was ever known to go astray or spend the night in a ditch. I regret that we were not able to experiment with this interesting plant; but if it really possesses this remarkable property, it deserves a wider popularity than it now enjoys.

While I was talking to the women and the constable —who was a Dublin man and very lonesome among these Irish-speaking people, who regarded him with scorn and derision—Betty had been exploring the junk-shops of the neighbourhood, and presently came back with the news that she had discovered a Dutch masterpiece. Now we are both very fond of Dutch art, so I hastened to look at the picture; and, indeed, it may have been an Ostade, for it was a small panel showing two boors drinking, and it seemed to me excellently painted; but when the keeper of the shop saw that we were interested, he named a price out of all reason, and I was not certain enough of my own judgment to back it to that extent. I intended to go back later on and do a little bargaining; but I didn't; and the first connoisseur who goes to Galway should take a look at

the picture—it is in a little shop just a few doors from the cathedral—and he may pick up a bargain.

We went on down the street, and crossed the Corrib River to the Claddagh—a picturesque huddle of thatched and whitewashed cottages, the homes of fishermen and their families, Irish of the Irish, who, from time immemorial have formed a unique community, almost a race apart. Galway, within its walls on the other side of the river, was very, very English; here on this strip of land next to the bay, the despised Irish built their cabins, and formed a colony which made its own laws, which was always ruled by one of its own members, where no strangers were permitted to dwell, and whose people always intermarried with each other. That old semi-feudal condition is, of course, no longer strictly maintained; but the Claddagh people still keep to themselves, the men follow the sea for a living just as they have always done, and the women peddle the catch about the streets of Galway, as has been their custom ever since the English settled there. They wear a quaint and distinctive costume, one feature of which is the red petticoat I have already described, and common to all Connemara women. But in addition to this is a blue mantle, and a white kerchief bound tightly round the head, and then over this, if the woman is unusually well-to-do, a fawn-coloured shawl. The feet are usually bare, and so are the sturdy legs, some inches of which, very red and rough from exposure to every weather, are visible below the short skirts.

The houses of the Claddagh have been built whereever fancy dictated, and in consequence form a most confusing jumble, for one man's back door usually

opens into another man's front yard. How a man gets home from the tavern on a dark night I don't know, but I suspect that the consumption of dillisk is large. We stopped to talk to a woman leaning over a half-door; and her children, who had been playing in the dirt, gathered around, and there is a picture of her quaint little house opposite the next page. Then while I foraged for more pictures, Betty sat down on a stone, and a perfect horde of children soon assembled to stare at her. They were very shy at first and perfectly well-behaved; but gradually they grew bolder, and finally, under careful encouragement, their tongues loosened, until they were chattering away like magpies.

The people of the Claddagh are said to be a very moral and religious race, who never go to sea or even away from home on any Sunday or religious holiday; and these dirty, unkempt, neglected, but chubby and red-cheeked children were capital illustrations of Kipling's lines:

> By a moon they all can play with—grubby and grimed and unshod—
> Very happy together, and very near to God.

They were certainly happy enough; and, whether they were near to God or not, they had all evidently been taught their catechism with great care, for when Betty took from one of them a little picture of the Madonna and asked who it was, they answered in chorus, without an instant's hesitation, "The blessed Virgin, miss."

The Claddagh people are dark as a rule, though here and there one sees a genuine Titian blond, and Spanish

blood has been ascribed to them; but they probably date much farther back than the Spaniards—back, indeed, to that ancient, original Irish race, "men of the leathern wallet," antedating the Milesians or Gaels who now form the bulk of the Irish people. The older race took refuge in the bleak Connemara hills before the stronger invaders, to come creeping down again and found their colony here at the mouth of the Corrib when the invaders had swept on eastward to the kindlier and more fertile country there. Their whole life is bound up in this topsy-turvy little settlement, where they live just as they have lived for centuries, undisturbed by the march of civilisation.

We tore ourselves away, at last, from this primeval place, and recrossed the river to the turf market, with its familiar little carts piled high with the dark fuel.

"The bogs are very wet this year, are they not?" I asked an old man.

"They are, sir, God save ye," he replied, his wrinkled face lighting up at the chance to talk to a stranger. "There never was such a year for rain. I'm sixty year, God bless ye, and I've never seen such another." And then he went on to relate the story of his life, with a "God save ye" to every clause. A hearty old fellow he was, in spite of his sixty years; and he had driven his cart of turf down ten miles out of the mountains, that morning, and would drive ten miles back that night; and if he was lucky he would get half a crown—sixty cents—for the load of turf which had taken a hard day's labour to cut, and numerous turnings during a month to dry.

We went on past some fragments of the old walls,

THE CLADDAGH, GALWAY

A CLADDAGH HOME

with a most romantic arched gateway, and through the fish market, over which the red-skirted women from the Claddagh presided—great strapping creatures, with broad hips and straight backs and shining, good-humoured faces. Most of them were selling an ugly, big-mouthed, unappetising-looking fish, whose name I couldn't catch; but they told us it was a fish for poor people, not for the likes of us, God bless ye—full of bones and scarcely worth the trouble of eating, but plentiful and therefore cheap.

The principal street of Galway is called Shop Street —a name so singularly lacking in imagination that it would prove the English origin of the town at once, were any proof needed—and about midway of this stands a beautiful four-storied building, known as Lynch's Castle, once a fine mansion but now a chandler's shop. The walls are ornamented with carved medallions, and there is a row of sculptured supports for a vanished balcony sticking out like gargoyles all around the top; and over the door there is the stone figure of a monkey holding a child, commemorating the saving of one of the Lynch children from a fire, by a favourite monkey, some centuries ago.

The Lynches were great people in old Galway, and another memorial of them exists just around the corner —a fragment of wall, with a doorway below and a mullioned window above, and it was from this window, so legend says, that James Lynch Fitzstephen, sometime mayor of Galway, hanged his son with his own hands. The principal inscription reads:

This memorial of the stern and unbending justice of the chief magistrate of this city, James Lynch Fitzstephen,

elected mayor A. D. 1493, who condemned and executed his own guilty son, Walter, on this spot, has been restored to its ancient site A. D. 1854, with the approval of the Town Commissioners, by their Chairman, Very Rev. Peter Daly, P. P., and Vicar of St. Nicholas.

Below the window is a skull and crossbones, with a much more interesting inscription:

1524
REMEMBER DEATHE VANITI OF VANITI
AND AL IS BUT VANITI

The story of the very upright Fitzstephen runs in this wise: He was a merchant, prominent in the Spanish trade, and fortunate in everything except in his only son, Walter, who was as bad a nut as was to be found anywhere. But he had shown some fondness for a Galway lady of good family, and it was hoped she might reform him; when, unhappily, she looked, or was thought to look, too favourably upon a handsome young hidalgo, who had come from Spain as the guest of the elder Fitzstephen. So young Walter waited for him one night at a dark corner, thrust a knife into his heart, and then gave himself up to his father, as the town's chief magistrate.

Walter, as is often the way with rake-hellies, was a great favourite in the town, and everybody interceded for his pardon, but his father condemned him to death. Whereupon a number of young bloods organised a rescue party, but just as they were breaking into the house, the inexorable parent put a noose about his son's neck, and hanged him from the window mullion above the crowd's head—the same mullion, I suppose, which you

A GALWAY VISTA

THE MEMORIAL OF A SPARTAN FATHER

can see in the picture opposite the preceding page.

Just behind the reminder of this fifteenth-century Brutus, stands the fourteenth-century church of St. Nicholas, a venerable and beautiful structure, with good windows and splendid doorways, and containing some interesting tombs—one of them in honour of Mayor Lynch, the hero of the tragedy I have just related. On the south wall is a large tablet to "Jane Eyre, relict of Edward Eyre," (I wonder if Charlotte Brontë ever heard of her), who died in 1760, aged 88. At the bottom of the slab the fact is commemorated that "The sum of 300L was given by the Widow Jane Eyre to the Corporation of Galway for the yearly sum of 24L to be distributed in bread to 36 poor objects, on every Sunday forever." The sexton told us that the yearly income from this bequest was now thirty-six pounds, but that the weekly distribution of bread had occasioned so much disturbance that it had been discontinued, and the income of the bequest was now divided equally among twelve deserving families.

As we stood there, the peal of bells in the tower began to ring for service, but their musical invitation went quite unheeded by the crowd in the market-place outside, all of whom, of course, were Catholics. One woman, clad in black, slipped into a pew just before the curate began to read the lesson. We waited a while to see if any one else would come, but no one did, and at last we quietly took ourselves off.

There was one other sight in Galway we wanted to see—the most famous of its kind in Ireland—and that was the salmon making their way up the Corrib River from the sea to spawn in the lake above; and the place

to see them is from the bridge which leads from the courthouse on the east bank of the river to the great walled jail on the west bank. Just above the bridge is the weir which backs up the water from Lough Corrib to afford power for some dozen mills—though all the mills, so far as I could see, are decayed and ruined and empty. But below this weir the salmon gather in such numbers that sometimes they lie side by side solidly clear across the bed of the stream.

A number of fishermen were flogging the water, and we sat down under the trees on the eastern bank to watch them for a while before going out on the bridge. Two or three of them were stationed on a narrow plank platform built out over the water just in front of us, and the others were on the farther bank, in the shadow of the grey wall of the jail. This is supposed to be the very best place in all Ireland to catch salmon, and, in the season, more anglers than the short stretch of shore can accommodate are eager to pay the fifteen shillings, which is the fee for a day's fishing there. They fish quite close together, which is somewhat awkward, but has its advantages occasionally; as, for instance, on that day, not very long ago, when one enthusiast, having hooked a noble fish, dropped dead in the act of playing it. The long account of this sad event which the Galway paper published, concluded with the following paragraph:

> Our readers will be glad to learn that the rod which Mr. Doyle dropped was immediately taken up by our esteemed townsman, Mr. Martin, who found the fish still on, and after ten minutes' play, succeeded in landing it—a fine clean-run salmon of fifteen pounds.

One cannot but admire the quick wit of Mr. Martin, who, seeing at a glance that his fellow-townsman was past all human aid, realised that the only thing to do was to save the fish, and saved it!

But no fish were caught while we were there. We had rather expected to see one hooked every minute, but we watched for half an hour, and there was not even a rise; so at last we walked out on the bridge to see if there were really any fish in the stream.

The bridge has a high parapet, worn glassy-smooth by the coat-sleeves of countless lookers-on, and there are convenient places to rest the feet, so we leaned over and looked down. The water was quite clear, and we could see the stones on the bottom plainly—but no fish.

"Look, there's one," said a voice at my elbow, and following the pointing finger, I saw a great salmon, his greenish back almost exactly the colour of the water, poised in the stream, swaying slowly from side to side, exerting himself just enough to hold his place against the current. Then the finger pointed to another and another, and we saw that the river was alive with fish —and then I looked around to see whose finger it was, and found myself gazing into the smiling eyes of a young priest—not exactly young, either, for his hair was sprinkled with grey; but his face was fresh and youthful.

"Of course you're from America," he said. "One can see that." And when I nodded assent, he added, "Well, you Americans brag like hell, but you have good reason to."

I glanced at him again, thinking perhaps I had mis-

taken his vocation; but there was no mistaking his rabat.

"I have been to America," he went on. "I went there as a beggar for a church here; and after my mission was done, I rested and enjoyed myself; and I want to say that there is no country like America."

The words were said with an earnestness that warmed my heart; and of course I agreed with him; and then, when he learned we were from Ohio, he told us how he had crossed our State on his way to San Francisco, and that seemed to establish a kind of relationship; and when we were satisfied with looking at the fish, he insisted on taking us through the marble works, just across the river, where some great columns of Connemara marble were being polished. It comes from a quarry high on Lissoughter, which we were soon to visit—though we didn't know it then!—and it is very beautiful indeed, usually a deep green, but sometimes a warm brown, and always gorgeously veined.

And then he asked us if we wouldn't like to see Queen's College, the Galway branch of the National University of Ireland; and of course we said we would, and so we started for it, he pushing his wheel before him; and on the way, we met a handsome old man, who stopped when he saw us, and smilingly asked for an introduction. It proved to be Bishop O'Dee, and even in the short chat we had with him, it was easy to see that he deserved his reputation for culture and scholarship. He has two pet aversions, so our guide told us, as we went on together, bribery and drunkenness. I don't imagine there is much bribery in Connaught, but

I fear the Bishop has a formidable antagonist in John Barleycorn.

We came to the college presently—a fine Gothic building, with a good quadrangle, and we went through its somewhat heterogeneous museum and looked in at some of the halls. There are now about a hundred and forty pupils, so our guide said, and the new seminary, which drew students from all the west of Ireland, and which was just getting nicely started, was certain to increase this number greatly.

The National University of Ireland was established in 1908, as I understand it, for the purpose of affording Catholic youth an opportunity for higher education. The act provides that "no test whatever of religious belief shall be imposed on any person as a condition of his becoming or continuing to be a professor, lecturer, fellow, scholar or student" of the college; nevertheless it is well understood that its spirit and atmosphere are Catholic, and such Protestant youth as desire higher education usually enter Trinity College, Dublin, or Queen's College, Belfast. There are three colleges in the National University of Ireland—University College, Dublin, which is the parent institution, Queen's College, Cork, and Queen's College, Galway. All of them are maintained by state grants.

I am not quite clear as to the maintenance of the new seminary, to which our guide next conducted us; but it is a mammoth building, with queer squat towers, giving it an aspect quite oriental. Our guide said that the architecture was Irish-Romanesque, but it reminded me of nothing so much as of the pictures I had seen of the temples of ancient Syria and Egypt. The semi-

nary is really an intermediate school, and is planned on a very extensive scale. Its promoters are hoping great things for it, which I trust will come to pass. We mounted to the top of the main tower, and looked out over the bay and the hills, and talked of America and of Ireland, and of many other things, and then our guide asked us if we wouldn't come and have tea with him.

"Ah, I hope you will come," he urged, seeing that we hesitated. "When I was in America, the welcome I got was so warm and open-hearted, that I feel I am forever indebted to all Americans, and it is a great pleasure to me when I am able to repay a little of that kindness. It's few opportunities I have, and I hope you won't refuse me this one."

So we accepted the invitation, telling him how kind we thought it, and started back through the streets, with the women and children courtesying to our guide as we passed, and he never failing to give them a pleasant word.

"'Tis not to my own quarters I'll be taking you," he explained, "but to those of a brother priest, who will be proud to have them put to this use," and he stopped in front of a row of little houses, called St. Joseph's Terrace, and opened the door of one of them, and ushered us in, and called the old servant, and bade her get us tea.

It was served in a bare little dining-room—with bread and butter and jam and cake—and very good it tasted, though the tea was far too strong for us, and we had to ask for some hot water with which to weaken it. Our host laughed at us; he drank his straight, with-

out milk or sugar, and he told us about the first time he ordered tea in New York. When he started to pour it, he thought the cook had forgot to put any tea in the pot, so he called the waiter and sent it back; and the waiter, who was Irish and understood, laughed and took the pot back and put some more tea in.

"It was still far too weak," went on our host; "but I was ashamed to say anything more, so I drank it, though I might as well have been drinking hot water. Indeed, I got no good tea in America. And I nearly burnt my mouth off me once, trying to eat ice-cream. I took a great spoonful, without knowing what it would be like, and I thought it would be the death of me. And I shall never forget the first time they served Indian corn. It was in great long ears, such as I had never seen before; and I had no idea how to eat it, so I said it didn't agree with me; and then I was astonished to see the other people at the table—educated, cultured people they were, too—pick it up in their fingers and gnaw it off just as an animal would! Ah, that was a strange sight!"

I do not know when I have spent a pleasanter half-hour; but he had to bid us good-bye, at last, for he was due at some service; and he wrung our hands and wished us Godspeed, and sprang on his bicycle and pedalled off down the road, turning at the corner to wave his hat to us. And I am sure his heart was light at thought of the good deed he had done that day!

Galway possesses a tram-line, which starts at the head of Shop Street and runs out to a suburb called Salthill; and as this happens to pass St. Joseph's Ter-

race, we walked slowly on until a tram should come along. And in a moment a woman stopped us—a woman so ragged and forlorn and with such a tale of woe that, in spite of my dislike for beggars and suspicion of them, I gave her sixpence; and she fairly broke down and wept at sight of that bit of silver, and we walked on followed by her blessings and thinking sadly of the want and misery of Ireland's people.

We had another instance of it, before long, for after we had got on the tram, an old man stopped it and tried to clamber aboard, but the conductor put him off, after a short sharp altercation, and he followed us along the sidewalk, shaking his stick and, I suppose, hurling curses after us. The conductor explained that the old fellow had no money to pay for a ticket, but had proposed to pay for it after he had collected some money which was due him in Galway. This he no doubt considered an entirely reasonable proposition, and he was justly incensed when the conductor refused to extend the small necessary credit.

"Them ones gave us trouble enough at first," the conductor added. "They thought because the trams were owned by the town that they should all ride free, and that only strangers should be made to pay. Even yet, they think it downright savage of us to put them off just because they haven't the price of a ticket. It costs us no more, they say, to take them than to leave them, and so, out of kindness and charity, we ought to take them. Och, but they're a thick-headed people!" he concluded, and retired to the rear platform to ruminate upon the trials of his position.

We got down at the head of Shop Street, and Betty

went on to the hotel to rest, while I spent a pleasant half-hour wandering about the streets and through the calf-market. There were numbers of little red calves, cooped up in tiny pens, and groups of countrymen standing about looking at them, their hands under their coat-tails and their faces quite destitute of expression. At long intervals there would be a little bargaining; which, if the would-be purchaser was in earnest, grew sharper and sharper, sometimes ending in mutual recriminations, and sometimes in an agreement, in which case buyer and seller struck hands on it. Then the calf in question would be caught and his legs tied together, and a piece of gunny-sack wrapped about him, and he would be carried away by his new owner. Or perhaps he might be sent somewhere by parcel-post. Calves tied up in gunny-sacks with their heads sticking out form a considerable portion of the Irish mail—how often have I seen the postmen lifting them on and off the cars or lugging them away to the parcel-room!

Betty rejoined me, after a time, and we got on the tram to ride out to Salthill. Curiously enough, when we had climbed to the top of it, we found sitting there the old man whom we had seen put off earlier in the afternoon. I don't know whether he recognised us; but he at once proceeded to relate to us the story of that misadventure, with great warmth and in minutest detail—just as he would relate it, no doubt, to every listener for a month to come.

"Why, God bless ye, sir, I told the felly he should have his penny," he explained, with the utmost earnestness. "There was a man in the town would be owin' me eight shillin's, and he had promised to pay me this

very evenin'—but it was no use; he put me off into the road, bad cess to him, and it was in my mind to lay my stick across his head. But he can't put me off now," he added triumphantly, and held up his ticket for us to see.

And then he told us how he had five miles to walk beyond the end of the tram-line before he would be home; but he seemed to think nothing of having had to walk ten or twelve miles to collect his wages. Indeed, most Irish regard such a walk as not worth thinking of; which is as well, since many children have to walk four or five miles to school, and men and women alike will trudge twice that distance in going from one tiny field to another to do a bit of cultivating. Our new-found friend seemed quite taken with us, for when the tram came to a stop, he asked us if we wouldn't have a drink with him; and when we declined, bade us a warm good-bye, with many kind wishes, and then shambled over to the public-house for a last drink by himself. Twenty minutes later, we saw him go past along the road, his face to the west, on the long walk to his tiny home among the hills.

Salthill is a popular summer resort, and has a picturesque beach. The view out over Galway Bay is very beautiful, and the wide stretch of water seems to offer a perfect harbour; but there were no ships riding at anchor there. Time was when the people of the town fancied their bay was to become a world-famous port because of its nearness to America, and a steamship company was formed, and the government was persuaded to build a great breakwater and half a mile of quays and a floating dock five acres in extent. But

the company's life was a short one, for one of its boats sank and another burned, and the other companies all preferred to go on to Liverpool or London or Southampton, and the docks and quays and harbour of Galway were left deserted, save for the little hookers of the Claddagh fishermen.

CHAPTER XIX

IAR CONNAUGHT

We were ready to say good-bye to Galway and to fare westward into far Connaught, most primitive of Irish provinces; but on Sunday there is only a single train each way, and the westbound one leaves Galway at six in the morning. We managed to catch it, somewhat to our surprise, crossed the Corrib River on a long bridge and viaduct, and were at once in Iar Connaught—West Connaught, the domain of the wild O'Flaherties, from whom the dwellers in Galway every Sunday besought the Lord to deliver them.

The train skirts the shore of Lough Corrib, and one has beautiful glimpses of the lake and the hills beyond; and then it plunges into a wild and desolate country, strewn with great glacial boulders, some of them poised so precariously on hill-side and cliff-edge that it seems the rattle of every passing train would bring them crashing down.

And then we came out upon wide moors, crossed by innumerable little streams, and then ahead of us the great Connemara mountains began to loom against the sky—gigantic masses of grey granite, bare of vegetation, even of the skin of turf which can find foothold almost anywhere, but which is powerless against these masses of solid rock. The Maamturk Mountains are the first to be seen, rugged giants two thousand feet high, and the road mounts toward them over a pass,

and then dips rapidly to the station at Recess, which was our stopping-point.

It was still so early that there was nobody about, and when we got to the hotel we found it locked; but the porter hastened to open the door in answer to our ring, and we found ourselves in one of the nicest hotels we had encountered anywhere in Ireland. We had already made up our minds to spend that Sunday climbing Lissoughter, a mountain just back of the hotel, famous for the view from its top; and so, as soon as we had disposed of our luggage and eaten a most appetising breakfast, we inquired how to get to it. And Sheila was summoned to tell us—Sheila with a complexion like peach-bloom, and the brightest of blue eyes, and the fluffiest of brown hair, fit to pose as the prototype of Sweet Peggy, or Kathleen Bawn, or Kitty Neil, or any other of the lovely girls the Irish poets delighted to sing. Not the least of the attractions of this hotel at Recess are the girls who work there—as bright and blooming a lot of Irish lasses as one could wish to see —and Sheila, I think, was the flower of them all. She told us how to go, and we set off happily through the soft, bright air of the morning.

Our road, at first, lay along the margin of a placid lake, then turned off sharply to the right, and the climb began. It was an easy climb, with beautiful views over bogs and lakes and mountains opening at every step. There was a wet bog on either side the road, and at a place where the peat was being cut, we walked out to take a closer look at it. And as we stood there gazing down into the black excavation, we felt the ground trembling beneath our feet; and when we looked up,

there was a man striding upward toward us, two hundred feet away, but at every stride shaking the bog so that we could feel the tremor distinctly. The bog shook more and more as he approached and passed us; and then the tremor grew fainter and fainter as he went on his way. Unless I had felt it, I would never have believed that the footsteps of a single man could have created so wide a disturbance, and I understood how serious were the difficulties the railways had to face in getting across the bogs of central Ireland.

Half a mile farther on, we came to a cluster of little cabins clinging to the hillside, and we paused to ask the way of a man who was pottering about them; and, after a moment, we found that we were talking to Mr. Rafferty, who with his brother, both bachelors, own the only quarry in the world which produces Connemara marble; and when he offered to show it to us, you may well believe we assented.

From the very first moment, I had perceived an air about Mr. Rafferty which puzzled me. He was undoubtedly Irish, and yet his manner of speaking was not precisely the Irish manner I had grown accustomed to; his intonation was not precisely the Irish intonation, his choice of words and acquaintance with slang was surprisingly wide for a man born and reared in Connemara, and there was a certain alertness about him which was not Irish at all. And then, when he started to tell us his story, I understood, for he had been born in New York and spent the first fifteen or twenty years of his life there. Not until then did I realise in how many subtle, scarcely recognisable ways does the American Irishman differ from the Irish Irishman.

His father was a Connemara man who had gone to America in the decade following the great famine and settled in New York, where the son who was talking to us was born. The father had come back to Connemara, again, for some reason, and had settled at Recess, and, by mere accident, one day discovered the vein of marble high on the side of Lissoughter. There was no railroad in the valley then, and nobody supposed the vein would ever be of any value, so he managed to get control of it, and his sons came back from America to help him work it. Its development was very slow and difficult, for the only way of getting the marble to market was to haul it along the mountain roads to Galway, forty miles distant.

But since the coming of the railroad, all that is changed. Some primitive machinery has been installed, larger blocks can be handled, and already more than one office building in New York has its vestibule embellished with the beautiful green stone. Even the fragments are carefully saved and worked up into small ornaments and novelties to sell to tourists—round towers and Celtic crosses and such things.

We were at the entrance to the quarry by this time, and he took us through and explained its workings to us. It is a surface vein, as you will see from the photograph opposite page 322, which I took next day, and no one knows its depth or its extent. Enough has been uncovered to last for many years, at the present rate of quarrying. Of course if it was in America, a great company would be formed to exploit it, and modern machinery installed, and it would be yanked out by the thousands of tons a day; but since it is in

Ireland, I doubt if the rate of production will ever be largely increased.

We bade Mr. Rafferty good-bye at last, and took up the climb again toward the summit of the mountain which loomed before us; up and up, with the view opening more and more. Away at the bottom of the valley ran the white ribbon of a road, with a cluster of thatched roofs huddled near it, here and there; and beyond the valley towered the granite sides of the Twelve Pins of Bunnabeola, the loftiest and most picturesque mountains in these western highlands.

We came to a cabin, presently, away up there by itself on the mountain side, and we stopped long enough to leave the specimens of marble which Mr. Rafferty had given us, for they threatened to become embarrassingly heavy before the climb was ended. The family who lived there came out to show us the best way up the hill, and stood watching us as we climbed on. The path for a time lay along the bottom of a brook; then we came out upon the bare hillside, with an outcrop of granite here and there and dripping bog between, and no living thing in sight except agile, black-faced sheep, who peered down at us curiously from every crag. The way grew steeper and steeper and the stretches of bog more wet and treacherous; but always the view was more magnificent, especially to the west, where the Twelve Pins were, and to the south, where the plain stretched away, gleaming with innumerable little lakes. I never saw so many lakes at one time as I saw that day—there must have been two or three hundred of them between us and the far horizon, each of them gleaming in the sun like a polished mirror.

After an hour of this steep and slippery work, Betty declared that she had had enough; but the last grey escarpment of the mountain loomed just over our heads, and I hated to give up with the goal so near. She said she would wait for me while I went up alone, so, leaving her cosily seated in a niche in the cliff, I scrambled on, along the granite wall, on hands and knees sometimes; and at last I came out upon the very summit, with one of the most beautiful views in all Ireland at my feet.

Lissoughter stands exactly at the end of a great transverse valley, with the Maamturk Mountains on one side and the Twelve Pins on the other, and at the bottom of this valley gleam the waters of Inagh and Derryclare; and the granite hills stretch away as far as the eye can see, one behind the other, rugged and bleak, without a sign of vegetation—far more impressive than the green-clad hills about Killarney. The day was gloriously clear, and I sat there for a long time, gazing first this way and then that, and I can shut my eyes now and see again that glorious landscape. The top of Lissoughter is a ring of granite, with a bog in the depression in the centre; and on the highest point of this ring some one had heaped up a little cairn of stones. Feeling something like Peary at the north pole, I tore a leaf from my note-book, wrote my name and address upon it, with greetings to the next comer, and placed it under the topmost stone of this cairn. I did not suppose that it would ever be discovered, but when I got home, I found a postal awaiting me from an Irish girl, who had climbed Lissoughter with a party a week later, and found my note where I had left it.

When we got down again to the cottage where we had left our marble, we found the man of the house out in front, and stopped for a chat with him. Yes, it was a fine day; very wet it had been, but a few more such days as this would do the potatoes a world of good, and one could get into the bogs again to cut the winter fuel. As we talked, children gathered from various directions, until there were ten standing about staring at us, and Betty asked him if they were the neighbours' children.

"They are not, miss," he answered, grinning. "They're all mine."

"All yours!" echoed Betty, and counted them again.

The man turned to the eldest girl.

"Mary Agnes, go bring the baby," he said; and Mary Agnes disappeared indoors, and came out presently with number eleven.

How they manage to live I don't know; but they do live, and, so far at least as the children are concerned, even grow fat. Their bright eyes and red cheeks spoke of anything but undernourishment, and it must take a large pot to hold enough to satisfy that family! How the pot is filled is the mystery.

Their home was typical of Connaught—and of the poorer part of all Ireland, indeed: a low cabin, built of stones and whitewashed, with two rooms, a dirt floor, a few pieces of rude furniture, a pile of straw and rags for a bed, and hardly enough clothes to go around. In fact, below the age of ten or twelve, it was impossible to tell the boys from the girls, for they were all dressed alike in a single garment, a sort of shift made of homespun flannel, and usually, I judge, cut out of

the mother's old red petticoats; and boys and girls alike have their hair cropped close. All through Connemara we saw this fashion—a single rudely-made garment of wool, worn by the children of both sexes all the year round, without undergarment of any kind, without shoes or stockings. The flannel the garments are made of is practically indestructible, and I fancy they are taken off only when outgrown and passed on to the next youngest member of the family. When a boy outgrows it and is privileged to put on trousers, it is a proud day for him, for he ceases to be a mere petticoated "malrach" and becomes a "gossure."

Mary Agnes, the oldest member of this particular family, was a girl of sixteen, who was soon to leave for America to try her fortune; I don't know by what miracles of self-denial the money for her passage had been scraped together! She was an ugly girl, with bad teeth and stupid expression, and I am afraid she will find life no bed of roses, even here in America. The rest of the children went to school; and the nearest schoolhouse was five Irish miles away!

We went on at last, down past the other cabins, which are occupied by the men employed in the quarry. They were all faithful replicas of the one I have described, and they were all swarming with children. I never ceased to be astonished at these children, for though they were dirty and half-naked, they all seemed plump and healthy. Potatoes, I suppose, is the main article of their diet, for every cabin had its deep-trenched patch, won by back-breaking toil from the rocks of the hillside. That leisurely walk down into the green valley is unforgettable, the day was so

bright, the air so fresh and sweet, the view so lovely.

We spent the remainder of the afternoon playing clock golf, and exploring the beautiful garden attached to the hotel; and that night we sat in front of a great open fire-place where a wood fire crackled, and luxuriated in the pleasant fatigue of a well-spent day. If I had known as much then as I do now, we would have spent other evenings there, for Recess is as good a point as any from which to explore Connaught, and the hotel there is immeasurably superior to any other in that section of Ireland—clean and bright and comfortable and well-managed, with food that was a pleasant variant from the unimaginative dishes we had grown so weary of. It has been built by the railroad company to encourage tourist traffic, and I don't see how it can pay; but, for the sake of travellers in that part of Ireland, I hope it will never be closed.

I said something of this, that evening, to the manager and to Sheila; and added to the latter that if she would tell me the secret of her complexion, I would make a fortune for both of us.

"'Tis just the air," she laughed. "Send your lady friends out here to us, and we'll soon have them blooming like roses."

So there is another reason for a stay at Recess.

I clambered back up to the quarry, next morning, for I wanted some pictures of it, and of the quaint cabins along the way. I found Mr. Rafferty there, and a gang of men busy loading some blocks of marble upon a cart, preparatory to taking them down the mountain. Just back of the quarry, two red-skirted

THE CONNEMARA MARBLE QUARRY

A CONNEMARA HOME

women were digging in a potato patch, and they looked so picturesque and Millet-like that I asked them if I might take their picture. They held a quick consultation, and then said I might provided I paid them two shillings first!

But I *did* want a picture of one of those poor little mountain cabins, and on my way back, I saw a woman standing at the door of one of them, and she passed the time of day so amiably that I stopped to talk. The year had been very hard, she said—as what year is not, in such a place!—and her husband was even then at Oughterard, trying to find work. Meanwhile, she was left with the children, to do the best she could, and what they found to live on I don't know; but she was glad for me to take a picture of her little place, with herself and the children and the dog standing in front of it, and I am sure the coin I slipped into the baby's fist was very welcome. That picture is opposite page 322, and it gives a better idea than any mere description could of these damp, dark, comfortless mountain homes, with their low walls, and tiny windows, and leaky, grass-grown thatch, tied on with ropes. Both the boys in the picture wear the red flannel garment common to all Connemara children. The girl has just outgrown it.

Farther on, I came upon a woman and her daughter, a girl of about sixteen, working in a potato patch; and the girl was really pretty, although at the moment she was engaged in spreading manure with her hands about the roots of the plants. Her skirt was kilted high, revealing her graceful and rounded legs, and when she smiled her teeth were very white. That was the finish-

ing touch, for teeth are bad in Ireland, and most pretty girls need only smile to disillusion one. So, after some talk about the weather, and about America, I asked the mother if I might not take the girl's picture; and the girl was willing enough, for she hastily let down her skirt, blushing with pleasure; but her mother shook her head.

"You are not the first one to be askin' that," she said; "but I have said no to all of them, for I would not have her growing vain."

"She has a right to be vain," I pointed out, "for she is very pretty; and it wouldn't hurt her to have her picture taken."

"Handsome is as handsome does," said her mother; "and she is not as good as she looks."

No doubt with a little more blarney I could have won her consent; but in my heart of hearts I knew she was right, and I didn't try to persuade her. It was not the first time I realised I was not cut out for a photographer! She said the girl would be going to America before long, and I advised her to take care of her teeth, and bade them good-bye and went on my way. I have regretted since that I didn't try the blarney, for that picture would certainly have embellished the pages of this book!

I had thought that the fine weather would bring out the turf cutters in force, and I had hoped to get a picture of them at work; but the cuttings were all empty, for some reason, and at last, after a final long look at the beautiful valley, I made my way back to the hotel, and an hour later we were faring westward toward Clifden.

The road ran for many miles with the granite masses of the Twelve Pins towering on the right, springing sheer two thousand feet from the bogs around them—great cones rising one behind the other, their summits gleaming so white in the sun that they seemed crowned with snow. We ran away from them, at last, across a dreary moor, down to the sea, and so to Clifden.

Clifden is a little modern town with a single wide street overlooking the bay; but we had time for only a glance at it, for the motor-bus was waiting which was to take us to Leenane,—which is pronounced to rhyme with "fan," as though it had no final "e"—and we were soon climbing out of the town, with a beautiful view of the bay to the left, and on a cliff close to the shore the great masts of the Marconi station, which is in touch with the coast of Newfoundland. No contrast could have been more complete—this latest and greatest of the achievements of science, set down in a country where nothing has altered for five centuries; a country to which the description penned by Rory O'Flaherty, more than a century before our Revolution, applies as closely and completely as it did when it was written. Another contrast, just as great, is that between the handsome young Italian who set those masts here and the men who live in the little cottages along the sea under them. And yet Marconi himself is half Irish—for his mother was Irish, and he has married an Irish girl; and I fancy he is glad that one of the greatest of his stations should be here on the Irish coast.

We mounted steadily along a winding road, and at every turn the scenery grew more superb—great sweeps

of rugged landscape, of bog and rocky field and granite mountain, rousing the soul like a blare of martial music. Beyond Letterfrank, the road dips into the lovely Pass of Kylemore; and again, as back at Glengarriff, it was bordered with fuchsia hedges, gay with scarlet flowers. And presently we were running close beside Kylemore Lake, with the white towers of the castle gleaming above the trees on the other side—a magnificent structure, now owned by the Duke of Manchester—financed by his Cincinnati father-in-law!

And then we came out upon a wide moor, and the road climbed up and up—and all at once, we came to the top of the pass, and there, far below us lay Killary Bay, a narrow arm of the Atlantic running back into the very heart of the Connemara mountains, which press upon it so closely that there is barely room for the road between rock and water. We dropped down toward it, passed a tiny mountain village, came out upon the shore, and sped along at the very edge of the water, until, far ahead, we saw the cluster of houses which is Leenane; and in another moment we had stopped before the rambling building which is McKeown's Hotel.

McKeown himself is a bearded giant of a man, with bronzed face and the sunniest of smiles, and his hotel is a sort of paradise for fishermen. To others it is not so attractive; but in surroundings it could hardly be surpassed. Right at its door stretches Killary Bay; back of it tower the steep hills, and across the inlet grey and purple giants spring two thousand feet into the air, right up from the water's edge.

A few looms have been set up by Mr. McKeown in a

building adjoining the hotel, and tweeds are woven there from yarn spun in the neighbourhood, forming a small industry which gives employment to a number of persons; and a few yards farther down the road is a station of the constabulary, and it looked so bright and inviting that I stopped in for a chat with the men.

I have already spoken of the Royal Irish Constabulary—the force which polices the country; slim, soldierly men, governed from Dublin Castle, and really constituting an army, eleven thousand strong, armed with carbines, sword bayonets and revolvers, and ready to be concentrated instantly wherever there is trouble. They are nearly all Irishmen, so it is not a foreign army, but they are seldom assigned to the districts where they were born and reared; and the men who command them from Dublin Castle are English army officers, who are in no way responsible to the public. All, in fact, that Ireland has to do with the Royal Irish Constabulary is to foot the bills.

Because of this fact, because in the old days they were called out to assist at every eviction and at every political or religious arrest, because their services are still required at every trial and mass-meeting and fair and market, and finally because their demeanour is sometimes rather top-lofty, the Irish generally regard them with a suspicion and dislike which seem to me undeserved. So far as I came into contact with them, I found them courteous and kindly men, and apparently as good Irishmen as any one could desire. But there is one cause for complaint which has a real basis, and that is that, in a country which is as free of crime as Ireland now is, a police force should be maintained

which averages one to every 394 of the population, and which costs annually about $7,500,000. In the old days of evictions and coercion acts and political and religious strife, some such force may have been necessary; but that need has passed. Crime is to-day much less frequent and serious in Ireland than in England, yet in Ireland the per capita cost of the police is $1.64, while in England it is only fifty-six cents.

But the members of the constabulary are not to blame for this, and one grows accustomed to seeing them everywhere—at the Dublin crossings, at the street corners of every little village, walking briskly in pairs along the loneliest of mountain roads, stationed in the wilds of the hills or amid the desolation of the bogs, often with no house in sight except the barrack in which they live.

I certainly got a warm welcome, that day, from the sergeant in charge of the Leenane barrack, and from the one constable who happened to be on duty there. They showed me all through the place, clean and bare and Spartan-like, with their kits along the wall, ready to be caught up at a moment's notice, for a call to duty may come at any time, and there must be no delay. It was a real barrack, too, with heavy bars across the windows, and a door that would resist any mob.

And then they showed me their equipment. To the belt which they all wear a leather case is suspended for the baton, and a square leather pouch which contains a pair of handcuffs. At the back is the ammunition pouch, and on the side opposite the baton hangs the sword-bayonet, which can also be used as a knife or

dagger. The small carbine they carry weighs only six and a half pounds, but is wonderfully compact and efficient, with a six-shot magazine, and a graduated sight up to two thousand yards. No man in this station had ever had occasion to use his rifle, and they all said earnestly that they hoped they never would.

They have a beat of twelve miles along the mountain roads, and they cover it twice every day and once every night. I asked them the reason for so much vigilance, for I could not imagine any serious crime back in these hills among this simple and kindly people; and they said that there was really very little crime; but a sheep would be missing now and then, or a bit of poaching would be done, or perhaps a quarrel would arise between some farmer and his labourers and a horse would be lamed—it was such things as those they had to be on the lookout for. The position of constable is a good one—for Ireland; and I imagine that most of those who enter the service stay in it till retired, for it carries an increase of pay every five years, with a pension after twenty-five years' service, or in case of disability.

We sat and talked for a long time about America and Ireland, and intelligent fellows I found them, though perhaps with a little of the soldier's contempt for the shiftless civilian. And then I walked on to the village which nestles at the head of the bay, a single street of slated houses. Everybody wanted to talk, and I remember one old granny, with face incredibly wrinkled, who sat in front of her door knitting a stocking without once glancing at it, and who told me she was eighty-five and had nine children in America.

And I met the girl who, with her brother, teaches the village school, and she asked me if I wouldn't come in, before I left, and see the school, and I promised her I would.

Then I noticed that one of the little shops had the name "Gaynor" over the door, and I stopped in to ask the proprietor if he knew that was also the name of the mayor of New York. He did—indeed, he knew as much about Mayor Gaynor as I did. There were two other men sitting there, and they asked me to sit down. One of them was a mail carrier, and he told me something of his trips back up into the hills, and how almost all the letters he delivered were from America, each with a bit of money in it.

"When there is bad times in America," he went on, "and when men are out of work there, it pinches us here just as hard as it pinches them there—harder, maybe, for if the money don't come, there is nothing for it but the work-house. A man can't make a living on these poor hill farms, no matter how hard he tries, and there is no work to be had about here, save a little car driving and such like in the summer for visitors like yourself."

"Why do they stay here?" I asked. "Why don't they go away?"

"Where would they go? There's no place for them to go in Ireland—America is the only place, and every one that can raise the money does go there, you may be sure. Them that's left behind are too poor or too old to cross the sea; and then, however bad it is, there is some that will not leave the little home they was born in, so long as they can stay there and keep the

soul in their body. There be some so wrongheaded that they won't even move down into the valley farms which they might be getting from the Congested Districts Board."

I have been fighting shy of the Congested Districts Board ever since I left Cork; but here, in the very heart of the worst of the congested districts, I may as well explain what the words mean.

No one, travelling from Galway to Clifden and then on to Leenane, as we had done, would have thought of the district as "congested," for, while the little huddles of thatched roofs which mark a village are fairly frequent, they are scarcely noticeable in the great stretches of hill and bog and rocky meadow among which they nestle. And, indeed, "congested," in this sense, does not mean crowded with people; it means exceptionally poor; and there is no district of Ireland poorer than Connaught, that land of bog and granite, where every inch of ground must be either elaborately drained or wrested from the rock, and where, even after years of labour, the fields are still either so wet that a little extra rain ruins them, or so full of stones that the reaping must be done with the hook. In Connaught, even the poorest man has a right to be proud of his home, because, however small and mean it may be, it represents infinite toil.

But how does it come that any one lives in these hills, where life is such a constant and heartrending struggle? The answer is that Connaught is the Irish pale. After Cromwell had subdued Ireland, the Puritan Parliament announced that it was "Not their inten-

tion to extirpate the whole nation," as many people had been led, not unreasonably, to believe; and a year later, they proved their humanitarian intentions by enacting that such Irish as survived should be permitted to live thereafter between the Atlantic and the Shannon, certain portions of which were set aside, as the Parliament said in unintentional rhyme,

> "For the habitation
> of the Irish nation."

It was stipulated, however, that they should not settle within four miles of the sea, within four miles of a town, nor within two miles of the Shannon; they were given until the first of May, 1654, to get into their new homes, after which date, any found outside of Connaught were to be treated as outlaws and killed out of hand. The misery and sufferings of the little bands of terror-stricken people, wandering in the depth of winter westward along unknown roads to an unknown, inhospitable country, will not bear thinking of —or, thinking of it, one can understand something of Irish hate for Cromwell's memory. As a matter of fact, the edict sounds worse than it was, as such edicts usually do, for it was impossible for it to be literally carried out. All the Irish were *not* banished to Connaught, for many of them preferred to face death where they had always lived rather than among the Connemara hills; and they were not murdered out of hand, but given work, for the new landlords were glad to employ them at menial labour, since no other labourers were to be had. But from that time on, it was usually the Protestant Englishman who lived in

the mansion house, and the Irish Catholic whose home was roofed with thatch and floored with dirt.

Let us be careful not to grow sentimental over the wrongs of Ireland, nor to magnify them. They are not unique, for they have been paralleled many times in history. We should be careful, too, not to judge a seventeenth-century Parliament by twentieth-century ideals. There is this to be said for it: that its only hope of existence lay in stamping out rebellion, and the only way, apparently, to stamp out rebellion in Ireland was to kill the rebels. That the Parliament chose to banish them rather than kill them is so much to its credit, and I doubt not that, after the vote had been taken, many of those old Puritans went home with the feeling that they had done a merciful and Christian deed. Nor should we forget that the wars of religion were as bitter on one side as on the other: St. Bartholomew was far more bloody than Drogheda, and the removal of the Irish to Connaught was matched by the banishment of the Huguenots from France, thirty years later. It did not seem possible, in that day, that Protestant and Catholic could ever live side by side in peace and friendship, and that narrow bigotry alone would strive to keep alive the memory of those mistaken, centuries-old feuds and persecutions.

The best portions of Connaught were already fully settled, as the fugitive Irish found when they got there; furthermore, although the broad Shannon formed a natural moat which would hold safely the Irish who had crossed it, it was further strengthened by giving to Cromwell's soldiers all the broad belt of fertile land along the river, as well as the rich valleys running back

into the hills. All that was left for the newcomers were the bleak moors and rocky mountain-sides, where no one else would live; and since these, for the most part, were quite unfit to be cultivated, there was every reason to believe that the people condemned to live among them would soon cease from troubling.

But they didn't—at least, all of them didn't. They built rude shelters of rock for their families, and the cabins one sees to-day throughout Connemara are the direct descendants of those early ones, with scarcely an altered feature. They set to work to reclaim the hillsides, and though, every year, the spade turned up a new crop of stones, the fields slowly grew capable of producing a little food. Before that time, of course, many of the people had starved, but those that were left were all the better off, and it looked, for a while, as though they might some day be able to open the door without seeing the wolf there.

But the end was not yet. It should be remembered that these mountain farms did not belong to the people who had created them, and who laboured constantly to improve them, but were part of the "plantation" of some court favourite or adventurer, so that rent must be paid for them; and as the farm improved the rent was raised, although the improvement resulted from the labour of the man who paid the rent, so that, in the end, it was not the tenant who was richer, but the landlord. If the rent was raised to a point where the tenant couldn't pay it, or if the landlord wanted the land, the tenant was evicted with absolutely no compensation for the improvements he had made. Then it was a question either of going to America, or,

if there wasn't money enough for that, as was usually the case, of taking up some other stretch of rocky hillside, and beginning the weary struggle all over again. The craze for grazing, which started some forty or fifty years ago, resulted in the eviction of many thousands from farms their own industry had made, and to-day, as one drives through Connaught, one sees great stretches of land given over to sheep which were once part of such farms, and one can tell it is so by the faint ridges which mark the old tillage.

So evolution proceeded, but for the Irish peasantry it was devolution, for every step was a step downward; and millions of them left the land in despair, and millions of those that remained were unable to make enough to live on; and the workhouses kept getting bigger and bigger, and the people poorer and poorer; until finally, a few English statesmen, with a somewhat broader outlook than the average, saw that something had to be done, and set about doing it. There is no need for me to enumerate the steps that were taken—some of them wise, many of them foolish; but the greatest of all was the enactment of legislation permitting and assisting tenants to become the owners of the land on which they lived.

This was in 1891, when the Congested Districts Board was established, with wide powers, which have since been made wider still; but the kernel of it all is this: in the west of Ireland, where the need is greatest, the board has power to condemn and purchase at a fair valuation the fertile land of the great land-owners, except the demesne, which is the park about the mansion house, and can then re-sell this land to small

farmers, giving them about sixty years to pay for it, the payments being figured on the basis of the cost price, plus interest at the rate of four per cent. Such condemnation and re-selling is necessarily slow, but it is going steadily forward, and must in the end, change the whole face of western Ireland. Indeed, there are some who think it has already done so.

The Congested Districts Board has done much more than buy and re-sell land; it has aided and developed agriculture, improved the breeding of stock, encouraged the establishment of industries, developed the fisheries along the western coast, established technical schools—in short, it has assumed a sort of paternal oversight of the districts committed to its care.

All of the "congested districts" aren't in the west of Ireland—there are districts in the east and south where the holdings are "uneconomic"—that is, where the income possible to be derived from them is not enough to support a family—sometimes not enough even to pay the rent. But conditions are worst in Connaught, and remain worst, in spite of the work of the board. It is here that life has sunk to its lowest terms, where the usual home is a hovel unfit for habitation, sheltering not only the family, but the chickens and the pigs and the donkey; it is here that manure is piled habitually just outside the door, and where fearful epidemics sweep the countryside. At the time we were at Leenane, there was an outbreak of typhus a few miles back in the mountains. It had been announced with hysterical scare-heads by the Dublin papers, but the people of the neighbourhood thought little of it—they had seen typhus so often!

Which brings me back to Gaynor's general store, and the mail-carrier who was telling me about the letters from America.

"Yes," Gaynor put in, "and about the only letters that go out from here are for America—and well I know what is inside them! There was a time when I sold stamps to the poor people, or gave credit to them when they couldn't pay, and the only stamps I ever thought of buying was the tuppence-ha'penny ones, which we used to have to put on American letters. And many is the letter I have written for poor starving people praying for a little help from the son or daughter who had gone to the States, and who was maybe forgetting how hard life is back here in Connaught."

"Not many of them do be forgetting," said the mail-carrier, puffing his pipe slowly; "I will say that for them. There be many away from here now," he went on, "just for the summer—gone to England or Scotland to help with the harvest. It is a hard life, but they make eighteen shillings a week there, and the money they bring back with them will help many a family through the winter. There be thousands and thousands here in Connaught who could not live but for the money they make every year in this way."

He stopped to watch Gaynor weigh out a shilling's worth of flour—American flour!—for a girl who had come in with a dingy basket, into which the flour was dumped; and then he went on to tell me something about his trips up over the hills—for no house in Ireland is too poor or too remote for the mail-carrier to reach. Talk about rural delivery! With us, a man must have his mail-box down by the highroad, where

the carrier can reach it easily; in Ireland, the carrier climbs to every man's very door, and puts the letter into his hand—and I can imagine the joy that it brings. Irish mail-carriers play Santa Claus all the year round!

I tore myself away, at last, from this absorbing conversation, and started back to the hotel. The sun had not yet set; but suddenly the thought came to me that it must be very late, and I snatched out my watch and looked at it. It was half-past eight—an hour after the hotel's dinner time! However, in a fishing hotel, they are accustomed to the vagaries of their guests; and I found that dinner had been kept hot for me.

An hour later, as we sat on the balcony in front of our room, gazing out across the moonlit water, we heard the tread of quick feet along the road, and, looking down, saw pass two constables, starting out upon their night patrol. And whenever I think of Leenane, I see those two slim, erect figures marching vigorously away into the darkness along the lonely road.

CHAPTER XX

JOYCE'S COUNTRY

TWENTY-FIVE miles away to the eastward from Leenane, across a wild stretch of hill and bog known as Joyce's Country, are the ruins of the old abbey of Cong, and thither we set out, next morning, behind a little black mare who would need all her staying powers for the trip that day, and on a car driven, as was fitting, by a man named Joyce—as perhaps half the men are who live in this neighbourhood. "Jyce" is the local pronunciation; and the Joyces are one of the handsomest and fiercest breeds of mountaineers to be met with anywhere—fit companions for those of Kentucky and Tennessee.

The original Joyces were Welshmen, so it is said, who came to Ireland about 1300, and, with the permission of the all-powerful O'Flaherties, settled in this country between Lough Mask and the sea. Why they should have chosen so inhospitable a region I don't know—perhaps because no one else wanted it. Certainly the O'Flaherties didn't; for they preferred to live along the sea, where fish was plentiful. But the Joyces were an agricultural people; they turned as much of the hillside as they could into arable land, cultivated with the spade to this day and reaped with the hook. On the rest of it, they grazed their flocks, and they still graze them there.

It was a beautiful, warm day, with fleecy clouds in

the sky and a blue haze about the hills, and everybody was out enjoying the sunshine as we drove through the village and turned up along the shoulder of the Devil's Mother Mountain. The fine weather had brought the men and women out to work in the potato fields—such of the men, that is, as hadn't yet left for England or Scotland to spend the summer in the fields there. Usually there were five or six women to one man, each of them armed with a spade or a fork, and it was pitiful to see the poor little patches in which they were working. Almost always they were on a steep hillside—there isn't much else but hillside hereabouts which can be cultivated, for even where there happens to be a little level land in the valley, it is almost always wet bog in which nothing can be grown. The patches were very, very small, and each of them was surrounded by a high wall built of the stones which had been dug from the ground; and at the bottom of every slope was a pile of surplus stones which had been rolled there out of the way.

The potatoes were planted in drills about two feet wide, and then between the drills a deep trench was dug to carry off the water, for even on the hillsides the ground is very wet; and these trenches must be kept clear of weeds so that the water will run off freely, and of course the drills must be kept clear of weeds too; and the ground is so poor that manure must be freely used, and the only way to get it where it is needed is to place it there by hand. And almost every time the spade is driven into the ground, it brings up more stones which must be carried away, until it sometimes becomes quite a problem what to do with them.

As many as possible are built into the fences; and the dominant feature of every Connemara landscape is the zig-zag tapestry of stone walls which covers it. They run in every direction—up the sides of hills so steep that it seems a miracle they don't slide off, around fields so small that the ground can't be seen above the fence, along the tops of high ridges where they form grotesque patterns against the sky which shines through every chink, in places where there seems to be no need whatever for a wall and yet to which the stones have been carried with prodigious labour.

But do not suppose that, even with all this toil, the fields are cleared of stones. Everywhere there are outcroppings of solid rock which the tiller of the field has been unable to dislodge, and around which he must sow and reap. In consequence, there are practically no fields in which it would be possible to drive a plow, and few indeed in which it is possible to swing a scythe. The fields themselves are so small that one wonders anybody should trouble to cultivate them at all. I have seen scores and scores not more than fifty feet square, each surrounded with its high wall; I have seen many less than that, with just space enough for a two-roomed hovel, where the family must take the stock into the house with them, because there is no place for an out-building, and where the manure must be heaped against the wall, because to throw it a foot away would be to put it on land belonging to some one else. The land which the family itself cultivated might lie in twenty different places, miles away.

This complication, which is unparalleled elsewhere in the world, arose in this way: Half a century ago a

man would lease some acres of ground and by terrific labour convert it into tillable land. As his sons grew up and his daughters married, he would sub-let to each of his sons and sons-in-law small portions of his holding, and their other relatives would do the same, so that, while each of them might be the tenant of four or five acres, they would be scattered in a dozen different places. A second generation further complicated things. An acre field would be split up between ten different tenants, each with his stone wall around his portion; and one of the biggest jobs the Congested Districts Board has had to tackle is that of so redistributing the land that each tenant shall have a compact portion.

Imagine the small farmers of any neighbourhood called together for the purpose of redistribution, each of them suspicious and jealous of all the others, each of them believing that his scattered bits of land are quite exceptionally valuable, each of them remembering the bitter labour by which he reclaimed each rood; and then imagine the patience and tact which are needed to convince them that they are not being cheated, and to persuade them to agree to the proposed re-allotment. Talk about the labours of Hercules! Why they were child's play compared with this!

We drove on, that morning, down a wide valley, past these tiny walled fields and thatched houses, now and then passing one of the neat little slated cottages which the County Council builds where it can, but which are distressingly few and far between; and then we came out into the grazing country, with stone walls running

right up the thousand-foot hillsides to the very top, and the white sheep dotted over the green turf; and then we turned off along a side-road, which speedily mounted through a narrow pass, across a wide bog, and so to the head of a deep gorge where, far below us, stretched the blue waters of Lough Nafooey, lying in a deep cup of granite mountains.

I have never seen a steeper road than that which zig-zags down into this valley, and I was very glad indeed to get off and walk, not only because of the steepness, but also because on foot I could stop whenever I chose and look at the beautiful scene below—the long, narrow lake, crowded in on the south by steep, bare mountains, and with a white ribbon of road running along its northern edge, past a cluster of houses built close beside it, and with the furrowed fields behind them mounting steeply upwards. The whole village was out at work in the fields, and the red petticoats of the women gave the scene just that added touch of colour it needed.

The mountains on the southern shore grew less rugged presently, and as soon as the ground grew level enough for tillage, it presented such a complicated pattern of stone walls as must be unique, even here in this bewalled district. For more than a mile we drove along opposite them; and then we reached the end of the lake, and struck off along another valley toward Lough Mask. We were soon on another desolate moor, dotted with the black stumps of bog oak; and then the road sank into a pass, as the hills closed in on either side, and skirted a dancing brook, and then before us opened the lower part of Lough Mask.

I have said that these Irish mountaineers are fierce, and I must explain now what I meant by that, for a kindlier people, one more eager to bid you welcome or help you on your way, you will find nowhere. The same is true of the Kentucky mountaineers; and yet they do not hesitate to put a bullet through any man they regard as an enemy. So with the Joyces and the O'Malleys. It was here among these hills that the "Invincibles" and the "Moonlighters" ranged in the days of the Land League; their notions of right and wrong were, and still are, the old primitive ones. They believe in the Mosaic law of an eye for an eye; murder after murder has been done here, and no one disapproved; and yet a man with a purse filled with gold, or a woman with no protection save her chastity, might walk these roads unharmed and unafraid on the darkest night.

Just before one reaches the bridge over the narrow stream through which the upper lake flows into the lower, the road passes close to a cluster of houses, and it was in one of them that two bailiffs of Lord Ardilaun were beaten to death, and their bodies placed in sacks weighted with stones; and then they were carried down to the lake, and every one along the road was made to lend a hand to carrying them. That was but one tragedy of many such—outbreaks of the feud which started six centuries ago, and which only within the past decade has shown any sign of being outlived and forgotten.

I do not know when I have been more impressed and astonished than when I stood on the bridge over the river below Lough Mask, and gazed out upon that

IN "JOYCE'S COUNTRY"

ON THE SHORE OF LOUGH MASK

noble sheet of water, stretching away to the north like an inland sea. It was dotted with beautiful islands, but no farther shore was visible, not even when we mounted a bold crag overhanging the water in order to get a wider view. We went on again, with the lake at our left, and then the road turned away between high stone walls—only these walls were solidly built of dressed stones laid in mortar, and were surmounted with broken glass set in cement. There was a gate here and there, through which we could catch glimpses of wild and unkempt woods, a-riot with a luxuriant vegetation bearing witness to the richness of the soil.

The wall must have been ten feet high, and after we had gone on for half an hour with no sign of it coming to an end, we asked the driver what it was, and he told us that it was the wall surrounding part of the estate of Lord Ardilaun, which stretches clear on to Cong, a distance of six or eight miles—the very choicest land of the whole district. Some of it is let to tenants, so our driver said, at rents which are almost prohibitive; but the most part is walled in, with many notices against trespassing posted about it—a preserve for woodcock.

We dropped through the little town of Rosshill, once the seat of the Earl of Leitrim (but now owned by Lord Ardilaun), and then into Clonbur (also owned by Lord Ardilaun), where the wall stopped for a while to make room for the houses, but began again as soon as the village ended; and then we passed a curious collection of cairns on a plateau at the side of the road, some of them surmounted by weather-blackened wooden crosses; and then on a hill to the right we saw another

great cairn; and then we suddenly realised that we were on the battlefield of Moytura, which raged for five days over this peninsula between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask, so long ago that nobody knows exactly when it was, though it has been roughly dated at two thousand years before Christ.

The contestants in that battle were the Firbolgs, the men of the leathern wallets, who had come from the south to Ireland five days before the flood, and the De Dananns, a tall, fair, blue-eyed race of magicians from the north, who had "settled on the Connemara mountains in the likeness of a blue mist." The De Dananns were the victors, and the cairns we saw that day were the monuments they raised over the burial places of their dead warriors.

There was another famous battle on this same peninsula, not so many years ago, for over there on the shore of Lough Mask lived Captain Boycott, whose name has passed into the language as that of the silent and effective weapon which the peasantry forged against him, in Land League days.

Half a mile farther, and a sharp turn of the road brought us into the village of Cong, a single street of drab houses, whose principal attraction is the ruins of the abbey where the Cross of Cong was fashioned; but the long drive had made us hungry, and so first of all we stopped at a clean little inn and had tea, and it was set forth in a service of old silver lustre which Betty marvelled over so warmly that she almost forgot to eat. And then we started for the abbey, which, of course, like everything else hereabouts, belongs to Lord Ardilaun.

From the road, all that one can see of it is a portion of the wall of the church, so overgrown with ivy that even the windows are covered; but we managed to rout out a boy, who took us around to the cloister side, which is very beautiful indeed, with its lovely broken arcades, its rounded arches, its clustered pillars, and round-headed windows—some glimpse of which will be found in the photograph opposite page 346. There is not much of interest left in the church, but in one corner is a small, dark, stone-roofed charnel house, still heaped high with the whitened skulls of the monks who were entombed there.

The abbey stands close to the bank of that wonderful white river which, coming underground from Lough Mask, bursts from the earth in a deep chasm a mile above Cong, and sweeps, deep and rapid, down into Lough Corrib. And the monks at Cong were more ingenious than most, for there, on a little island in the middle of the river, stand the ruins of their fishing-house, constructed over a narrow channel into which the nets were dropped, and they were so arranged that when a fish was captured, its struggles rang a bell back at the abbey, and some one would hasten to secure it. We made our way through an orchard of beautiful old apple trees bearded with lichen, waist-deep in grass, to the very edge of the stream, that I might get the picture of this labour-saving edifice, which you will find opposite the preceding page.

Then the boy asked us if we would care to see Ashford House, the seat of Lord Ardilaun; and for the benefit of those of my readers who are wondering from what ancient family Lord Ardilaun is descended, I may

as well state here that he is none other than Guinness, of Guinness's Stout, and takes his title of Baron Ardilaun from a little island out in Lough Corrib. We said, of course, that we should like to see Ashford House, and we walked for half a mile through the beautiful woods of the demesne, up to the great mansion of limestone and granite, set at the edge of a terrace sloping down to the lake. The entrance to it is under a square tower with drawbridge and portcullised gateway, and the house itself is a mammoth affair, with turrets and battlements and towers and machicolations and other mediævalities, quite useless and meaningless on a modern residence, and there are acres and acres of elaborately-planted grounds, with sunken gardens and fountains and long shady avenues stretching away into dim distance.

But nobody lives here except a few caretakers, for Lord Ardilaun, an old man of seventy-three, prefers the south of France, so that Ashford House is deserted from year's end to year's end, except for a few days now and then when a shooting-party of more than usual importance comes to kill the woodcock. For the ordinary party, another mansion, farther down the lake on Doon Hill, suffices; but when the king comes, as he did in 1905, of course the great house has to be opened.

One reads in Murray, which is a very British guide-book, how, on that occasion, the king and his party killed ninety brace of woodcock in a single day; and how, five years later, 587 brace were bagged in five days; but it will be quite impossible for you to understand, unless you are also British, the peculiar veneration with which such coverts as these are regarded by

THE CLOISTER AT CONG ABBEY

THE MONKS' FISHING-HOUSE, CONG ABBEY

British sportsmen, and the peculiar cast of mind which deems it right and proper that thousands of fertile acres should be maintained as game preserves in a land where most of the people are forced to wring their livelihood from the rocky hillsides.

It is only for such great parties that Lord Ardilaun returns to do the honours; and he hastens away again, as soon as the parties are over. He knows nothing of his tenants; he leaves the collection of his rents to a factor, and the preservation of his coverts to a force of gamekeepers, and any one caught inside the wall may expect to be prosecuted to the limit of the law.

Now I have no quarrel with Lord Ardilaun. The stout he sells is honest stout, and he got possession of this estate by honest purchase, which is more than can be said for most great estates in Ireland. But he presents an example of that absentee landlordism which has been the chief and peculiar curse of this unfortunate country. With landlords who lived on their estates and looked after their properties and got acquainted with their tenants and took some human interest in their welfare, the tenants themselves seldom had any quarrel. It was the landlords who lived in England or on the continent, who entrusted the collection of rents to agents, and whose only interest in their Irish estates was to get the largest possible returns from them—it was these men who kept the country in an uproar of eviction and persecution.

Indeed, I believe that if all Irish landlords were resident landlords, the Irish labourer would be better off without the land purchase act; for there are no more grasping and exacting masters in the world than the

small farmers to whom the great estates are passing. The old owners might be despotic, but they were not mean; and where they lived among their people and came to know them, their despotism was usually a benevolent despotism, tempered with mercy. The rule of the small farmer will be a despotism, too, but there will be no mercy about it. Joyce, our driver, voiced all this in a sentence, as we were driving back.

"Land purchase, is it?" he said, puffing his short pipe, and staring out across the hills. "Yes, I have heard much of it; but I'm thinking it will be a cruel time for the poor."

The neighbourhood of Cong is remarkable for its natural curiosities, for the ground to the north toward Lough Mask is honeycombed with caves, made by the water working its way through to Lough Corrib. Geologists explain it learnedly, and doubtless to their own satisfaction, by saying that the peninsula is composed of carboniferous limestone which has been perforated and undermined by the solvent action of the free carbonic acid in the river water; but I prefer to believe, with the residents of the neighbourhood, that it was the work of the Little People.

The lofty tunnel through which the sunken river flows is accessible in several places, and one of these, called the Pigeon Hole, is not far from the village and is worth visiting. It is in the centre of a field, and is a perpendicular hole some sixty feet deep, clothed with ferns and moss and very damp indeed, and the steps by which one goes down are very slippery, so that some caution is necessary; but there at the bottom is a

vaulted cavern through which the river sweeps. The girl who has come along, carrying a wisp of straw, lights it and walks away into the depths of the cavern, but the effect is not especially dazzling and the smoke from the straw is most offensive. They order these things better in France—at the Grotto of Han, for instance!

Another curiosity of the peninsula is not a natural but an artificial one—a canal dug during famine times with government money to connect Lough Corrib with Lough Mask. This was expected to be a great blessing to the west of Ireland, extending navigation from Galway clear up across Lough Mask and Lough Conn to Ballina; but, alas, when it was finished, it was found that the canal wouldn't hold water, for the rock through which it was cut was so porous that the water ran through it like a sieve, and left the canal as dry as a bone. So there it remains to this day, and one may walk from end to end of it dryshod and ponder on the marvels of English rule in Ireland!

One thing more at Cong is worth inspecting, and that is the old cross which stands at the intersection of the street with the road to the abbey. It was erected centuries ago to the memory of two abbots, Nicol and Gilbert O'Duffy, whose names may yet be read on its base; and it is a cross that can work miracles. Here is one of them:

There was a boy here at Cong, once, who was stupid and could learn nothing, but spent all his time wandering along the river or climbing the hills or lying in the fields staring up at the sky. Everybody said he would come to a bad end; but one day he sat down on the

base of this cross, and fell asleep with his head against it; and that night, when he went home, he took up the newspaper which his father was reading and read aloud every word that was on it; and they took him to the priest, thinking a spell was on him, and there was not a book the priest had, in Latin or Irish or any language whatever, but the boy he could read it at a glance; and they sent him down to Cork to the college there, but there was nothing his masters could teach him that he did not know already; and the fame of him became so great that when Queen Victoria was looking about her for a man to put at the head of the new college at Galway, she hit upon him, and so he was given charge of Queen's College, and his name was O'Brien Crowe, and he made that college a great college, and he taught things there that no other man in Ireland had ever so much as dreamed of!

I am sorry I had not heard this tale when I was at Galway; I should have liked to ask Bishop O'Dee how much of it is true.

We returned to Leenane by a different road, which lay for some miles close beside the shore of Lough Corrib, white-capped now under a stiff wind which had arisen, and studded with lovely green islands. It is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful of the Irish lakes, but even here the shadow of Land League days still lingers, for close by the shore is Ebor Hall, which was the residence of Lord Mountmorris, who was beaten to death near by; and as we drove on, our jarvey pointed out the scenes of similar if less famous tragedies, whose details I have forgotten. But all that was

thirty years ago; the problem which the Land League tried to solve has been solved in another fashion; the peasantry of Ireland have won the fight for fair rent, fixed hold, and free sale, and can afford to forget the past.

Just beyond the Doon peninsula, the road opens up the long expanse of the narrow arm of the lake which runs back many miles into the mountains, and on an island a little distance from the shore, towers the keep of a ruined castle—Caisleán-na-Circe, or Hen Castle in the prosaic vernacular. Islands, as you will have remarked before this, were a favourite place in Ireland for castles and monasteries, and the deeper the water about them the better, for it was a welcome defence in the days when midnight raids were the favourite pastime of every chief, and no sport was so popular with the English as that of hunting the Irish "wolves."

There are many legends to explain the name of this castle in Lough Corrib. One is that the castle was built in a single night by an old witch and her hen, and she gave it and the hen to The O'Flaherty, telling him that, if the castle was ever besieged, he need not worry about provisions, since the hen would lay eggs enough to keep the garrison from want. It was not long before a force of O'Malleys ferried over from the mainland and camped down about the walls, and O'Flaherty, forgetting the witch's words, killed the hen and was soon starved out. Another legend is that the castle was held during a long siege by the formidable Gráinne, wife of Donell O'Flaherty, and that her husband was so proud of her that he named the place Hen Castle in her honour. Still another is that the

Joyces were holding it against the O'Flaherties, but were about to surrender, when the famous Grace O'Malley marched a party of her clansmen over the mountains from the sea and drove the O'Flaherties off, and so it was named after her. These are examples of what the Irish imagination can do when it turns itself loose; for the fact is that the castle, at least as it stands now, was built by Richard de Burgo, that first old doughty Norman ruler of Connaught, to hold the pass from the isthmus of Cong into the wilds of Connemara. The keep is plainly Anglo-Norman, flanked by great square towers of cut limestone.

A few miles farther on is the village of Maam, set in the midst of magnificent scenery at the intersection of two valleys, one running to the west and one to the south, closed in by the wildest, bleakest, ruggedest of mountains. Our driver drew up here to water and wind the horse, and I wandered about the village for a while, and stopped at last at the open door of a little cottage where an old woman and some children were sitting before a flaring fire of turf, and a hen was hovering some chickens in a basket in one corner. Three or four others were wandering about the dirt floor, looking for crumbs as a matter of habit, though they must have known perfectly well that there were no crumbs there.

I was welcomed heartily and invited to sit down before the fire, with that instinctive courtesy and openheartedness which is characteristic of the Irish peasantry. Let the traveller take shelter anywhere, pause before any door, and he will be greeted warmly. There is an old Irish riddle which runs something like this:

From house to house it goes,
A wanderer frail and slight,
And whether it rains or snows,
It bides outside in the night.

It is the footpath the Irish mean; and if they could bring it in out of the rain and the snow, I am sure they would, just as they bring their chickens and cats and dogs and pigs and donkeys in, to share the warmth of the fire.

So in this little cottage a stool was at once vacated for me and set in a good place, and a ring of smiling faces closed around me, and the rain of eager questions began as to whence I came and whither I was going. I wish I could give you some idea of the tangle of trash that littered the single room of that hovel—old clothes, old boards, broken baskets, a pile of turf in one corner but scattered all about where the chickens had been scratching at it, a low shelf piled with rags and straw for a bed, a rude dresser displaying some chipped dishes—but I despair of picturing it. And the dirty, ragged children, with their bright eyes and red cheeks; and the old woman, wrinkled and toil-worn, but obviously thinking life not so bad, after all . . .

A whistle from Joyce told me that he was ready to start, and we were soon climbing out of the valley, emerging at last upon a vast moor, with great mountain masses away to the south, their summits veiled in mist. We could see groups of people working in the bog here and there, and at last we came upon two men and two boys cutting turf close to the road. I asked them if I might take their picture, and they laughed

and agreed, and it is opposite this page, but the sun was setting and the light was not good enough to give me a sharp negative. Still one can see the man at the bottom of the ditch cutting the peat with a sharp-edged instrument like a narrow spade and throwing the water-soaked bricks out on the edge, where the boys picked them up and laid them out at a little distance to dry.

"There's one would make a picture," said Joyce, about ten minutes later, and I turned to see him pointing with his whip at a little girl unloading turf from the panniers of a donkey by the side of the road.

Needless to say, I was out of my seat in an instant, and Betty, scarcely less excited, was asking the girl if I might not take her picture; and then Joyce said something to her in the Irish, and then from across the bog came her mother's voice telling her, also in Irish, to hold still and do as the gentleman wished.

She was a child of eight or ten, with dark hair and eyes, and slighter and frailer than the average Irish child; and she wore the characteristic garment fashioned from red flannel which all the poor children in Connemara wear; and she was bare-headed and bare-footed; and her task was to drive the ragged little donkey out into the bog and fill the panniers with the bricks, and drive it back again to the side of the road, and pile the turf there, ready for the cart which would take it away. From the place where the turf was being cut to the roadside was at least a quarter of a mile, and how often that child had travelled that road that day I did not like to think. From the pile of turf that

THE TURF-CUTTERS

A GIRL OF "JOYCE'S COUNTRY"

lay at the side of the road, it was evident she had not idled!

She was not without her vanity, for she had her skirt kilted up, and let it quickly down as soon as she realised what I wanted; and then she let me pose her as I wished. You should have seen her astonishment when I pressed a small coin into her hand, as some slight recompense for the trouble I had given her; you should have seen her shining eyes and trembling lips . . .

Up we went and up, with the mists of evening deepening about us; and at last we reached the summit of the pass, and dropped rapidly down toward Leenane. Half an hour later, we trotted briskly up to the hotel, the little mare apparently as fresh as ever, in spite of the fifty miles, up hill and down, she had covered that day.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REAL IRISH PROBLEM

It was well we went to Cong when we did, for the next day was cold and rainy, with a clammy mist in the air which settled into the valleys and soaked everything it touched. I walked over to the village, after breakfast, to keep my promise to the school-teacher. The school is a dingy frame building with two rooms and two teachers, a man for the older pupils and a woman for the younger ones. They are brother and sister, and from their poor clothes and half-fed appearance, I judge that teachers are even worse paid in Ireland than elsewhere. But they both welcomed me warmly, and the man hastened to set out for me the only chair in the place, carefully dusting it beforehand.

He called the roll, and it was delightful to hear the soft, childish voices answer "Prisent, sorr," "Prisent, sorr." Then he counted heads to be sure, I suppose, that some child hadn't answered twice, once for himself and once for some absent friend. There were about thirty children present, ranging in age from six to fifteen; and they were all barefoot, of course, and such clothing as they had was very worn and ragged, and most of them had walked four or five miles, that morning, down out of the hills. The teacher said sadly that the attendance should be twice as large, but there was no way of enforcing the compulsory education law, though the priest did what he could.

I wish I could paint you a picture of that school, so that you could see it, as I can, when I close my eyes. In the larger room there was a little furniture—a chair and cheap desk for the teacher, some rude forms for the children, and a small blackboard; but the other room was absolutely bare, and the children sat around on the floor in a circle, with their legs sticking out in front of them, red with cold, while the teacher stood in their midst to hear them recite. Each of them had over his shoulder a cheap little satchel, usually tied together with string; and in this he carried his two or three books—thin, paper-covered affairs, which cost a penny each; and all the children, large and small, had to carry their books about with them all the time they were in school because there was no place to put them.

The reading lesson had just started when I entered the room where the smaller children were, and it was about the advantages of an education. It brought tears to the eyes to hear them, in their soft voices and sweet dialect, read aloud with intense earnestness what a great help education is in the battle of life and in how many ways it is useful. When the reading was done, the teacher asked them the meaning of the longest words, and had them tell again in their own way what the lesson had said, to be certain that they understood it.

Poor kiddies! As I looked at them, I could see in my mind's eye our schoolhouses back home, heated and ventilated by the best systems—there was ventilation enough here, heaven knows, for the door was wide open, but no heat, though the day was very raw and chilly,

and the children were shivering—equipped with expensive furniture and the latest devices of charts and maps; and I could see the well-fed, well-clothed children, with their beautiful costly books which make teachers almost unnecessary, languidly reading some such lesson as was being read here in Connaught, on the advantages of an education! It would not have been read so earnestly, be sure of that, nor with such poignant meaning.

And in that moment, I thrilled with a realisation of Ireland's greatest and truest need. It is not land purchase, or reform of the franchise, or temperance, or home rule, though these needs are great enough; it is education. It is education only that can solve her industrial problems and her labour problems; and, however she may prosper under the favouring laws of a new political régime, it is only by education, by the banishment of ignorance and illiteracy, that she can hope to take her place among the nations of the world.

It was a sort of vision I had, standing there in that bare little room, of a new Ireland, dotted with schools and colleges, as she was a thousand years ago, illumined with the white light of knowledge; but here, meanwhile, were these eager, bright-eyed, ragged little children, stumbling along the path of knowledge as well as they could; but a rocky path they find it, and how deserving of help they are! I wish you could have seen those soiled, thumbed little readers, which cost, as I have said, only a penny each, and which, if they had cost more, would have been beyond the reach of the average Connaught family.

I bought a few of them, afterwards, to bring home

with me, and when I looked through them, I found them very primitive indeed. Here, for instance, is Lesson Six in the primer:

Pat has a cat.
It is fat. It is on the mat.
The cat ran at the rat.
It bit the fat cat.
Pat hit the rat.
The rat ran. The cat ran at it.
The rat bit the fat cat.

Cats and rats used, I remember, to be favourite subjects in the readers of my own early school days; and so were dogs. It is still so in Ireland, as Lesson Eight will show:

Is it a dog?
It is a fox.
Was the fox in a box?
The dog was in the box.
He was in the mud.
Rub the mud off the dog.
He ran at the fox in the mud.
The dog ran at the fox and bit it.

My principal objection to this is that it is nonsense: how, for example, if the dog was in the box, could it have been also in the mud? These questions occur to children even more readily than to adults, and to teach them nonsense is wrong and unjust. Also these lessons tell no story; they have no continuity; they ask questions without answering them; they change the subject almost as often as the dictionary. Here, for instance, is the first lesson of the second term:

Tom put the best fish in a dish.
The cat sat near it on a rug.
Let the hen rest in her nest.
Frank rode a mile on an ass.
He went so fast he sent up the dust.

The last sentence shows it was an Irishman made this book; but why, in this lesson, did he not continue with the story of the fish in the dish, which the cat was plainly watching from the rug with malicious intent, instead of branching off to a wholly irrelevant remark about a hen, and then to an account of Frank's adventure with an ass? Perhaps the first step to be made in educational reform in Ireland is the adoption of better school-books, and there is no reason why this step should be delayed.

I went back, presently, to the other room where the larger boys and girls were reciting in small sections, standing shrinkingly before the shrivelled little teacher, whose fierceness, I am sure, was assumed for the occasion, and he got out for me a sheaf of compositions which the boys and girls had written on the subject, "My Home," and of which he was evidently very proud. They were written in the round, laborious penmanship of the copy-book, and the homes which they described were, for the most part, those poor little cabins clinging to the rocky hillsides, which I have tried to picture; but here the picture was drawn sharply and simply, with few strokes, without any suspicion that it was a tragic one. For instance, this is John Kerrigan's picture of

My Home.

My home is in County Galway and is placed in Gana-

ginula. It is built on a height near the roadside. The length of it is eighteen feet and the breadth is six feet. It is about ten feet high. The covering is timber and thatch. It is built with stones and mortar. There are four windows, two in the kitchen and two in the room. The floor is made of sand and gravel.

That was all that John Kerrigan found to describe about his home, and I dare say there wasn't much more; but it is easy to picture it standing there on the bleak hillside, with its low walls of rubble and its roof of thatch, and its two little rooms, nine feet by six, with dirt floor and tiny windows. And at one end of the kitchen there would be an open fireplace, with some blocks of turf smoking in it, and above the turf there would be hanging a black pot, where the potatoes are boiling which is all John will have for supper . . .

I put the compositions aside, for a lesson in Gaelic had begun. The teacher wrote on the little blackboard some sentences composed of the strangest-looking words imaginable, and the pronunciation of them was stranger still. But the lesson proceeded rapidly, and it was evident that most of the children understood Gaelic quite as well as they did English. That, of course, is not saying very much; and I fancy that about all these children can be expected to learn is to read and write. Indeed, it is a wonder that they learn even that, for the odds against them are almost overwhelming.

I bade them good-bye at last, and returned pensively to the hotel, and there I found the district physician making some repairs to his motor-cycle. It

probably needs them often, for the roads up into the hills are trying for anything on wheels; but he said it was surprising where it would go and how much knocking about it would stand. And then, naturally enough, we fell into talk about his work.

Every poor person in Ireland is, as I understand it, entitled to free medical attendance. The country is divided into districts, in each of which a doctor is stationed, paid partially by the government and depending for the remainder of his income on his private practice. Before a person is entitled to free attendance, he must secure a ticket from one of the poor-law guardians, who have the management of the charities in each district; and no physician is compelled to give free attendance, unless the person asking for it can produce one of these tickets.

"Even then," continued the doctor at Leenane, who was explaining all this to me, "I don't put myself out, if I think the person presenting the ticket can afford to pay. I look him over, of course, and give him some medicine, with instructions how to take it—the law compels me to do that; but I don't bother myself to see whether the instructions are carried out. And if he's really sick, he soon realises that if he wants me to be interested, he's got to pay for it, and he manages to find a guinea or so. This sounds hard-hearted, perhaps; but it's astonishing how many beggars there are in this country, and how the poor-law guardians let themselves be imposed on. Why, people come to me with cards and try to get free attendance who could buy and sell me ten times over! I don't bite my tongue telling them what I think of them, you may

well believe. The trouble is, the poor-law guardians are natives of the district and they all have some axe to grind; so the doctor, who is a stranger for whom they care nothing, gets the worst of it. This is about the worst district in Ireland, anyway, so big and poor and full of hills. A man has to work himself to death to make three hundred pounds a year out of it."

Various reflections occurred to me while he was talking. One was that three hundred pounds a year is many, many times the income of the average dweller in Connaught; and another was that, to leave any discretion to the physician in regard to the treatment of charity patients is not without its dangers; and still a third was that, in any sudden emergency, such as might occur at any time, many valuable minutes would be lost if the poor-law guardians had to be hunted up and a card obtained before the doctor could be summoned. I suppose, in such cases, the doctor is summoned first, and the card secured when there is time to do so.

It is probably only in cases of dire need that the district doctor is summoned at all. The fact that he is a stranger and a government appointee is enough to make a large section of the Irish peasantry distrust him. This one told me that he is never called for confinement cases, because every old Irish woman considers herself competent to handle them, and usually is; and that other cases are treated with "home remedies" or visits to holy wells, until they get so bad that the doctor is turned to as a last resort.

"The ignorance of the people is past all belief," he went on. "They haven't any idea of what causes disease; they never heard of germs; they don't know it

is unhealthy to have a stinking heap of manure and human excrement under the window or in front of the door; they don't believe there is any reason why a person dying with consumption shouldn't sleep in the same bed with other people, and eat out of the same dishes, and spit all about the place. And so we have typhus, and tuberculosis—you Americans are partially responsible for that."

"In what way?" I asked.

"The people born and reared in these western highlands, with lungs adapted through long generations to this soft, moist climate, can't stand the American atmosphere. When they are poor and live crowded together in your towns, consumption gets them; and then, when they're too far gone to work, they come back home to cough their lives out and poison all their friends. They lie in these dark cabins without a window, which soon become perfect plague-spots; and the children, playing on the filthy, infected floor, get the infection in their lungs; or perhaps they cut their knees and rub it into the sore. Ugh! it makes one sick to think about it. There ought to be a law preventing any such infected person landing in Ireland—you won't let such a one land in America."

I had to admit that that would be one way of dealing with the mischief; and I suggested that another way would be to try to educate the people to some knowledge of the simpler facts of hygiene. But the doctor snorted.

"Educate them!" he echoed. "You can't educate them! Why, you haven't any conception of the depths of their ignorance. And they're superstitious, too; they

don't believe in science; they think it's something irreligious, something against their faith. If prayers to the Virgin won't cure them, or a visit to some holy well or other, why nothing will. If I do cure them, I don't get the credit—they simply believe they've got on the good side of one of their saints. What is a man to do against such ignorance as that? The only reason they don't all die is because this country is so full of little streams that the running water carries off most of their filth, and the turf smoke which fills their houses helps to disinfect them."

I agreed that his was a hard task; and left him still tinkering with his motor-cycle, and went over to smoke a pipe with the men at the stables. Joyce, our driver of the day before, was there, and he smiled as he pointed his pipe-stem toward the doctor, with whom he had seen me talking.

"He's a hard one, he is," he said. "Not a word of advice nor a sup of medicine do you get out of that one, if he thinks you've got a shillin' about you. He thinks we're all liars and thieves, which is natural enough, for he's an Englishman—and I'm not sayin' but what it may be true of some of us," and he grinned around at his companions.

"Tell the gintleman about the other one," one of them suggested.

"Ah, Mister O'Beirn, that was," said Joyce; "a Galway man, born to the Irish. How he got the app'intment, I don't know; but he did stir this district up—went about givin' long talks, he did, about how we're made and why we get sick, and such like; and he went into the houses and made the women wash the childer

and set things to rights, and they bore with him because they knew he meant them no harm. He wore himself to a bone, he did, and we were all fond of him; but I'm not sayin' it wasn't a relief when he was moved to another district, and we could make ourselves comfortable again."

"No doubt the children are glad, too," I ventured.

"They are, sir; and why should one bother washin' them when they get dirty again right away? Sure the women have enough to do without that!"

But it would be a mistake to suppose that the lives of the women and girls are all work and no play. Betty chanced to remark to the girl who waited on our table at the hotel that she must find the winters very lonesome.

"Oh, not at all, miss," she protested. "We have a very good time in the winter with a dance every week; and at Christmas Mr. McKeown do be givin' us a big party here at the hotel. Then there will be maybe two or three weddings, and as many christenings, and some of the girls who have been to America will come home for a visit and there will be dances for them, so there is always plenty to do."

So Leenane has its social season, just the same as New York and Paris and London; and I suppose the same is true of every Irish village. The Irish are said to be great dancers, but we were never fortunate enough to see them at it.

You may perhaps have noticed that in such Irish conversations as I have given in these pages, I have contented myself with trying to indicate the idiom, without attempting to imitate the brogue; and this is be-

cause it is impossible to imitate it with any degree of accuracy. Such imitation would be either a burlesque or would be unreadable. For example, while we were talking to the waitress at Leenane, Betty asked her what a very delicious jam which she served with our tea was made of.

"Black törn, miss," she answered—at least, that is what it sounded like.

"Black törn?" repeated Betty. "What is it? A berry or a fruit?"

The girl tried to describe it, but not recognisably.

"Can you spell it?" asked Betty at last.

"I can, miss; b-l-a-c-k, black, c-u-r-r-a-n-t, törn," answered the girl.

We bade good-bye to Leenane, that afternoon, taking the motor-bus for Westport, and my friends of the constabulary were out to see me off and shake hands, and Gaynor sent a "God speed ye" after us from the door of his little shop, and the schoolmaster and his sister waved to us from the door of the school. It was almost like leaving old friends; and indeed, I often think of them as such, and of that drab little town crouching at the head of Killary, and of how serious a thing life is to those who dwell there. We looked back for a last glimpse of it, as we turned up the road out of the valley—the row of dingy houses, the grey mountains rising steeply behind them, the broad sheet of blue water in front—how plainly I recall that picture!

There were three other passengers on the bus—an elderly man and woman, rather obese and grumpy,

and a younger man with clean-shaven eager face; and we were puzzled for a time to determine their relationship, for the younger man was most assiduous in attending to the wants of his companions and pointing out the places of interest along the road. And then, finally, it dawned upon us—here was a personally conducted party; a man and wife who had brought a guide along to see them safely through the wilds of Ireland!

The road from Leenane to Westport is not nearly so picturesque as that from Clifden, for we soon ran out of the hills, and for miles and miles sped across a wild bog, without a sign of life except a few sheep grazing here and there. We met a flock of them upon the road, and the way the shepherd's dog, at a sharp whistle from him, herded his charges to one side out of the way was beautiful to see.

Then at last, far below us, at the bottom of a valley, we saw the roofs of Westport, and we started down the road into it—a steep and dangerous road, for we came within an ace of running down a loaded cart that was labouring up; and when we came to the foot of the hill, we were startled by a remarkable monument looming high in the middle of the principal street—a tall, fluted shaft, with two seated women at its base, rising from an octagonal pedestal, and surmounted by a heroic figure in knee breeches and trailing robe—without question the very ugliest monument I ever saw. It was so extraordinarily ugly that we came back next day to look at it, and discovered the following inscription:

To the Memory of
GEORGE GLENDINING
Born in Westport 1770
Died in Westport 1845

If the deceased had any other claim to fame except that he was born in Westport, and also ended his days there, it does not appear upon his monument.

Westport has only one hotel, and it is probably the worst in Ireland. When we had been ushered along its dark and dirty corridors, into a room as dingy as can be imagined, and had found that it was the best room to be had, and that there was nothing to do but grin and bear it, we sat down and looked at each other, and I could see in Betty's disgusted face some such thought as Touchstone voiced: "So here I am in Arden. The more fool I. When I was at home, I was in a better place."

" 'Travellers must be content,' " I said. "Let's get out of here and look at the town."

Betty agreed with alacrity; but we soon found that it is a dull and uninteresting place, offering no diversion except a stroll through Lord Sligo's demesne. The gate was open, so we entered and plodded along a sticky road, past the square, unimpressive mansion-house, out to the head of Clew Bay. We walked on, past the longest line of deserted quays and empty warehouses we had encountered in Ireland. There must be half a mile of quays, and the warehouses are towering, four-storied structures, with vast interiors given over to rats and spiders; and all along that dreary

vista, there was just one boat—a small one, unloading lumber.

It was government money, I suppose, which built the quay, and a government board which authorised it; and looking at it, one realises where Canon Hannay got the local colour for the descriptions of the activities of government boards which are scattered through his Irish stories. For Canon Hannay, whose pen name is George A. Birmingham, lives here at Westport; and the bay which faces it is the scene of most of his tales.

It is a beautiful bay, dotted with the greenest of islands; and it was among those islands that the irrepressible Meldon sailed in quest of Spanish gold; it was there the Major's niece had her surprising adventures; and I have wondered since if the grotesque statue back in the town may not have suggested that of the mythical General John Regan.

And there, in the distance, towering above the bay, is Croagh Patrick, the great hill, falling steeply into the water from a height of 2500 feet, down which Saint Patrick one fine morning drove all the snakes and toads and poisonous creatures in Ireland, to their death in the sea below. Indeed, the marks of their passage are still plainly to be seen, for the precipice down which they fell is furrowed and scraped in the most convincing manner:

> The Wicklow hills are very high,
> And so's the Hill of Howth, sir;
> But there's a hill much bigger still,
> Much higher nor them both, sir;
> 'Twas on the top of this high hill
> St. Patrick preached his sarmint

That drove the frogs into the bogs
And banished all the varmint.

The legend is that St. Patrick, who had spent forty days on the mountain in fasting and prayer, stood at the edge of the precipice and rang his little bell—the same bell we have seen in the museum at Dublin—and all the snakes and toads in Ireland, attracted by the sound, plunged over the cliff and so down into the sea.

From a distance, Croagh Patrick seems to end in a sharp point; but there is really a little plateau up there, some half-acre in extent, and a small church has been built there, and on the last Sunday in July, pilgrims gather from all over Ireland and proceed to the mountain on foot and toil up its rugged sides and attend Mass on the summit and then make the rounds of the stations on their knees, just as has been done from time immemorial. For Croagh Patrick is a very holy place, since Ireland's great apostle prayed and fasted there, and those who pray and fast there likewise shall not go unrewarded.

I heard the click of a typewriter, as I went up the walk to the rectory, that evening, to spend a few hours with Canon Hannay, and it must be only by improving every minute that he gets through the immense amount of work he manages to accomplish. He had just arranged for an American lecture tour in the following October, and both he and his wife were pleasantly excited at the prospect of encountering American sleeping-cars and soft-shelled crabs and corn on the cob, and other such novelties, some of which they had heard were very dreadful. I reassured them as well as I

could; and then we talked awhile about George Moore's inimitable reminiscences, and Canon Hannay's own books; but the gist of the evening was the discussion of Ireland and Irish problems which occupied the greater part of it. It was very late indeed when I arose to say good-night.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TRIALS OF A CONDUCTOR

We took a last look about the town, next morning, not forgetting the Glendining monument, which has the fascination supreme ugliness sometimes possesses; and then we walked on down to the station, where a loquacious old woman accosted Betty with a tale of woe which culminated in an appeal for aid; and it was suddenly borne in on me that not once in the whole of Connaught had we encountered a beggar. Not even a child had held out its hand or indicated in any way that it desired or expected alms. And I do not know that I can pay any greater compliment to the people of that distressful province than by setting down this fact. We were in Mayo now—and Mayo is different!

The first town out of Westport is Castlebar, which, as Murray puts it, "has all the buildings usual in a county town, viz. Asylum, Gaol, Court-house and Barracks," and they can be seen looming up above the other buildings as the train passes, some half mile away. Beyond Castlebar, the line crosses the so-called plains of Mayo, a vast expanse of naked limestone rock, very ugly and sinister; and then to the left is a village dominated by a round tower; and finally we came to Claremorris, where we were to change cars.

Claremorris, no doubt, also has an asylum, a jail, a court-house and a barracks; but we didn't go out to see, for nobody seemed to know just when our train

might be expected, and we were afraid to run any risks. So we sat down on the platform, and Betty fell into talk with a clean, nice-looking old man, who was carefully gathering up all the dodgers and posters and old newspapers that were lying around, and folding them up and putting them in his pocket, I suppose to read at leisure after he got home. And he told about where he lived, and how many children he had, and described the disposition of each of them; and then he questioned Betty about her condition in life, and age, and size of family, and all the time he was looking intently at her mouth.

"Tell me, miss," he said, at last, "is them your own teeth you've got?"

"Indeed they are," laughed Betty, and clashed them to prove it.

"I would hardly believe it," he went on, and looked closer. "I niver saw any like them."

"They're strong as iron," and Betty clashed them again.

"And white as snow. I wish my daughter was here, for she will not believe me when I tell her."

Good teeth, as I have remarked before, are the exception in Ireland; and most of those that appear good at first glance, turn out, at second glance, to be fabrications of the dentist. Perhaps it has always been so. Irish poets are fond of dwelling on the glories of Irish hair, and it is still glorious; they tell over and over again of the brightness of Irish eyes, and they are still bright; they describe how many times the beauty of Irish complexions, and there is none to match them anywhere else in the world; but I do not remember that

any of them refer to Irish teeth. It is a pity, for many a pretty face is ruined by the ugly teeth a smile discloses.

We got away from Claremorris, finally, after narrowly escaping being carried back to Westport, and proceeded northward over a new line which has been built across the plains of County Mayo. There were few passengers, and we had a compartment to ourselves, except for two priests who rode with us for a short distance, and who wanted to know all about President Wilson, of whom they had heard many splendid things. Just where we crossed into County Sligo I don't know; but we were in it at Collooney, a village more prosperous than most, with a number of mills; and then we came to Ballysadare, where there are some famous salmon fisheries.

As we ran on past Ballysadare, a hill like a truncated cone loomed up on the left, and in the centre of the level top was something that looked like a huge bump, and as we drew nearer, we saw that it was a great cairn of loose stones piled on top of each other. The hill was Knocknarea, and the cairn, which is six hundred feet around and thirty-five feet high, is said to have been piled over the body of Meave, Queen of Connaught, by her tribesmen, in the first century after Christ. Meave was killed while bathing in Lough Ree by Conal Carnach, who, angry at her share in the death of the mighty Cuchulain, put a stone into a sling and cast it at her with such sure aim that he inflicted a mortal wound. There is some dispute as to whether she was really borne to the top of Knocknarea for burial; but the cairn is called "Miscan Meave," or

"Meave's Heap," and if it does not actually cover her body, it probably commemorates her death. She lived so long ago that her name has passed into folk-lore—in England as Queen Mab.

Knocknarea, with its strange shape, dominates the whole landscape, and is in sight all the way to Sligo, for the train describes a half-circle around it. Sligo itself is a considerable town, with more bustle about its streets than is usual in western Ireland, and the proprietor of its principal hotel is a canny individual who follows the precept, once so popular with American railroads, of charging all the traffic will bear. When I asked the price of a double room, he looked me over, and then he said ten shillings the night.

"Ten shillings a night!" I echoed, in some surprise, for I had not expected to encounter rates so metropolitan on the west coast of Ireland; and then I asked to see the room, thinking it might be something palatial. But it was quite an ordinary room; clean and airy and comfortable enough; but I judged the usual charge for it was about five shillings. There are few things I detest more than being overcharged. "Come along," I said to Betty. "There's another hotel in this town; we'll have a look at it."

The proprietor was waiting nervously in the lobby.

"What's the matter?" he asked, as we came down. "Isn't the room all right?"

"Oh, it's right enough," I said; "but I'm not going to pay two prices for it."

"But this is the best hotel in Sligo," he protested. "There's an American millionaire and his wife staying here right now."

"Well, I'm not a millionaire," I said; "and even if I were, I wouldn't pay ten shillings for that room," and I started to walk out, for I didn't want to argue about it.

But he followed me to the door.

"What would you pay, now?" he asked, ingratiatingly.

I looked at him in surprise, for I hadn't had any idea of fixing his rates for him.

"Five shillings," I said.

"You may have it for six," he countered.

I hesitated. I didn't like the man; but it was a nice room, and the dining-room looked clean. Probably we should fare worse if we went farther.

"All right," I agreed finally; and I am bound to admit that he never showed any malice, but treated us as nicely as possible during all our stay in Sligo. Perhaps he is a retired jarvey, and this is just his way of doing business.

Sligo, with its well-built houses and bustling streets, has every appearance of being prosperous, and I have been told that it is one of the few towns in Ireland which is growing in population. It has had its share of battles and sieges, for Red Hugh O'Donnell captured it from the English, and then the English captured it from Red Hugh, and camped in the monastery and did what they could to destroy it; but enough of it remains to make a most interesting ruin, and we set out at once to see it.

It is a Norman foundation, dating from 1252, but a good deal of the existing structure is later than that.

The most interesting feature, to my mind, is the row of eight narrow lancet windows lighting the choir of the church. I like these early lancets, and I am inclined to question whether the wide windows and elaborate tracery of later Gothic are as dignified and severely beautiful. There is a grace and simplicity about these tall, narrow openings, with their pointed arches, which cannot be surpassed.

There are some interesting monuments, too, in the choir, notably a most elaborate one to O'Conor Sligo against the south wall. O'Conor and his wife, life-size, kneel facing each other in two niches, over and below and on either side of which are sculptured cherubs and saints and skulls and swords and drums and spades and hooks and hour-glasses, together with the arms of the family and an appropriate motto or two. From the choir, a low door gives access to the charnel-house, and beyond that is the graveyard; while from the nave there is an entrance to the cloisters, three sides of which are very well preserved, though the level of the ground almost touches the base of the pillars.

It is, I should say, at least four feet higher than it was when the cloisters were built, and this accretion is mostly human dust, for the graveyard has been in active use for a good many centuries. Burials grew so excessive, at last, that before one body could be placed in the ground, another had to be dug out of it; and gruesome stories are told of the ruthless way in which old skeletons were torn from the graves and thrown out upon the ground and allowed to lie there, a scandal to the whole county. All that has changed now, and there wasn't a bone in sight the day we visited

the place. Indeed, the old caretaker waxed very indignant about the way he had been wronged.

"'Tis in that book you have in your hand the slander is," he said, and nodded toward my red-bound Murray, and I read the sentence aloud:

> "The exposure of human remains, and the general neglect here and in other church ruins, are a scandal to the local authorities."

"Now, I ask ye to look around, sir," continued the caretaker, excitedly, "and tell me if ye see anywhere aught to warrant such words as them ones. Human remains, indeed! Ye see, sir, it was like this. The day the felly was here who wrote that book, I had just picked up a bone which had got uncovered on me, and slipped it under a tomb temporary like, till I could find time to bury it decent; and then he come by, and saw it, and that was what he writ. The bones do be workin' up to the surface all the time—and how can that be helped, I should like to know? But I put them under again as soon as I see them. As for neglect —look about ye and tell me if ye see neglect."

I assured him that everything seemed to be in good shape, for the grass had just been cut and everything was very tidy. And then he told me that he and his helper had been working on the place for a week past, because, in a few days, the Irish Antiquarian Society was to meet at Sligo, and its members would be poking their noses about everywhere. From which I inferred that, perhaps, at ordinary times, the place may be rather ragged, and that an occasional bone *may* escape the guardian's watchful eye.

When we got back to the hotel and entered the dining-room for dinner, we were amused to find that the American millionaire and wife, of whom the proprietor had boasted, were no other than the personally-conducted couple who had come with us on the coach from Leenane to Westport. They were eating grumpily, while their guide, who ate with them, was doing his best to impart an air of cheerfulness to the meal by chattering away about the country. The head-waiter hovered near in a tremor of anxiety, and almost jumped out of his skin whenever the guide raised his finger.

I went into the smoking-room, later on, to write some letters; and presently the door opened, and the guide slipped in, and closed the door carefully, and sat down with a sigh, and got out a pipe and filled and lighted it, and rang for a whiskey and soda. And then I caught his eye, and I couldn't help smiling at its expression, and in a minute we were talking. He was a special Cook guide, he told me, and the two people with him were from Chicago.

"I fancied," he went on, "when I took this engagement, that I was going to have an easy time of it with just two people, but I have never worked so hard in my life. The man is all right; but all the woman wants to do is to keep moving on. You know Glengarriff? Well, then you know what a jolly place it is, and what a splendid trip it is over the hills from Macroom. Would you believe me, that woman would not even turn her head to look at that view. I would say to her, 'Now, Mrs. Blank, isn't that superb!' and she would just bat her eyelids; and when we got to

Glengarriff, she raised a most awful row because we had to stay there over night, and because there was no light but candles in the bedrooms.

"I don't know why such people travel at all," he went on wearily. "Yes I do, too—she travels just to buy post-cards and send them back home. She buys a hundred at every stop, and as soon as she gets them addressed and posted, she is ready to start on. Ruins? Why she won't look at ruins. She wouldn't even get out of the carriage at Muckross Abbey—but she thinks that new Catholic cathedral at Killarney a marvel of beauty. It is the only thing she has grown enthusiastic about since she has been in Ireland. We had planned to stay at Killarney four days, but she wanted to go on before she had been there four hours. I tell you, sir, it's disheartening."

I asked him how long he had been conducting for Cook, and he said only for a short time, for he was an actor by profession, and hoped to return to the stage some day. But by a run of bad luck, he had been involved in three or four failures, and had been driven to Cook's to make a living. He had been to America, and he told me with what company, but I have forgotten, and then he was going on to tell me what rôles he had played and which of them had been his greatest successes, and the worn, harassed look left his face —and just then the door opened and the Chicagoan stuck his head in, and frowned when he saw us talking and laughing together; and my companion grew suddenly sober, and went out to see what was wanted, and I didn't see him again. I suppose they were on their way at daybreak.

Sligo is the centre of one of the most interesting districts in Ireland for the antiquarian. There is that great cairn on the top of Knocknarea, and on the plain of Carrowmore near the mountain's foot is such a collection of megalithic remains as exists nowhere else in the British Isles, while on the summit of a hill overshadowing Lough Gill is a remarkable enclosure, resembling Stonehenge, but far more extensive.

It was for Carrowmore we set off on foot, next morning, determined to spend the day, which was beautifully bright and warm, in a leisurely ramble over the plain, which, four thousand years ago, was the scene of a great battle, in which the De Dananns were again the victors, as they were at Moytura, below Lough Mask. This battle is known as Northern Moytura, and here the De Dananns met and conquered Balor of the Evil Eye and his Formorians, and after that they were undisputed masters of Erin for a thousand years, until the Milesians, or Gaels, sailing from south-western Europe, beached their boats upon the shore of Kenmare Bay. It was to mark the graves of the warriors who fell in that dim-distant fray that the circles and cromlechs which dot its site were probably erected; but the Irish have another theory, which we shall hear presently.

I shall not soon forget that walk, at first through the busy streets of the town, past solid, well-built houses of brick, with bright shops on the lower floor and living-rooms above; then into the poorer and quainter quarter, where the houses are all one-storied, built of rubble, roofed with straw, and, as we could see through the open doors, stuffed with trash, as all

these little Irish houses seem to be; and finally out along the country road, between fragrant hedges, occasionally passing a pretty villa, set in the midst of handsome grounds—and then we came to a place where the road branched, and we stopped.

Our guide-book gave no definite directions as to how to get to Carrowmore. "On Carrowmore," it says, with magnificent vagueness, "within three miles south-west of Sligo, is a large and most interesting series of megalithic remains"; nor does it tell how far the remains are apart, or how to find them. If it had been Baedeker, now, we would not have stood there hesitant at the cross-roads, because he would not only have told us which way to turn, but would have provided a diagram, and led us step by step from one cromlech to the other. There is no Baedeker for Ireland, which is a pity, for I have never yet found a guide to equal that painstaking German.

There was no one to ask, so we took the road which led toward Knocknarea; but after we had gone some distance, a telegraph-boy came by on his wheel, and told us that we should have taken the other road; so we walked back to the branch and turned up it. The road mounted steadily, and after about a mile of up-hill work, we came to a cluster of thatched houses, and I went up to one of them to ask the way of a woman who was leaning over her half-door.

I think I have already said somewhere that Irish directions are the vaguest in the world—perhaps this is the reason Murray is so vague, since it is written by an Irishman!—and the conversation on this occasion ran something like this:

"Good morning," I began. "It is a fine day, isn't it?"

"It is so, glory be to God."

"Can you tell me how to get to the cromlechs?"

"The cromlechs? What might that be?"

"The big stone monuments that are back here in the fields somewhere."

"Ah—so it is the big stones you would be after?"

"Yes. Can you tell me how to get to them?"

"I might," said the woman cautiously. She had been looking at me all this time with the brightest of eyes, and then she looked at Betty, who had remained behind at the gate. "Is yon one your wife?" she asked, with a nod in Betty's direction.

"Yes."

"You would be from America."

"Yes."

"Have you people hereabouts?"

"Oh, no; we haven't any relatives in Ireland."

"And would you be comin' all this way just to see the big stones?"

"We want to see everything," I explained. "The stones are near here, aren't they?"

"They are so. Just a step up yonder lane, and you are right among them."

She was preparing to ask further questions; but this direction seemed definite enough, so I thanked her and fled, and Betty and I proceeded to take a step up the lane. We took many steps without seeing any stones; and finally we turned up a narrow by-lane, and came to a tiny cottage, hidden in the trees. We were greeted by a noisy barking, and then a man hurried out

of the cottage and quieted the dog and told us not to be alarmed. We told him we were looking for the stones.

"There be some just a small step from here," he said; "but you would never find them by yourselves, so I will go with you. You are from America, I'm thinking?"

"Yes," I admitted, wondering, with sinking heart, if it was going to begin all over again.

"I have four brothers in America, and all doing well, glory be to God, though seldom it is that I hear from them."

"How did you happen to stay in Ireland?" I asked.

"One must stay with the mother," he explained simply. "I was the oldest, so that was for me to do."

He was a nice-looking man of middle age, with a kindly, intelligent face, and eyes very bright; and while his clothes were old and worn, they were clean.

"She is dead now, God rest her soul," he added, with a little convulsion of the face I didn't understand till later, "and I am alone here."

"What," I said; "not married?"

"No," he answered, with a smile, "there's just Tricker and me."

"Tricker?"

"Sure that's the dog, and a great help he is to me. Come here, Tricker, and show the lady and gentleman what you can do." The shaggy black dog came and sat down in front of him, looking up at him with shining eyes. "You would hardly believe it, miss, but Tricker gathers all my eggs for me, and he can tell a duck egg from a hen egg. If I do be having a bit

of company, I will tell Tricker to go out and bring in some duck eggs, and I have never known him to make a mistake. Or perhaps I will be wanting some water from the spring, and I just give Tricker the bucket and send him for it. Or perhaps I will be wanting some coal, and then I just tell Tricker to fetch it."

There was a little pile of coal lying in one corner of the yard, and I had noticed it with some surprise, for we had seen nothing but turf in the west of Ireland; but our host told us that the coal came from Donegal and that it was better than turf and even cheaper in the long run.

"Tricker," he said, "take in some coal!"

Tricker ran to the coal and picked up a lump in his jaws and trotted through the open door of the house and laid the lump down on the hearth inside; then he came back and took in another lump, and then a third, and finally his master stopped him.

"He would be taking it all in if I left him to himself," he said. "He is not very well, for he was kicked by the mare the other day, and I thought for a time he was going to die on me. But he did not, glory be to God, and I think he will soon be well again. And now, if you will come this way, I will be showing you the stones."

He led the way across a field, which he said was his, and then over a stone wall into another; and in the middle of it was a depressed tomb with slabbed sides, in which, I suppose, at some far-off time, the body of some chieftain had been laid; and then our guide showed us the path which we must follow to get to the cromlechs; and then I put my hand in my pocket.

"Ah, no," he protested, drawing back.

"For Tricker," I said; "to get him some dainty, because he's ill."

His face softened.

"Ah, well, sir," he said, "if you put it like that, I'll take it, and Tricker and I both thank ye kindly; and you, miss. God speed ye," and he stood watching us for quite a while, as we made our way up toward the road which ran along the edge of the ridge above us.

As soon as we gained it, we saw the first of the cromlechs; and then, in a farther field, we saw another —great stones, standing upright in a circle of smaller ones, with a mighty covering slab on top, grey and lichened, and most impressive. They are supposed, as I have said, to mark the graves of warriors who fell in battle four thousand years ago; but the Irish peasantry explain them in a more romantic way, as the beds which Diarmuid prepared nightly for his mistress, Gráinne, during the year they fled together up and down Ireland to escape the wrath of her husband, the mighty Finn MacCool.

Gráinne, you will remember, was the daughter of King Cormac, and she it was who won that race up Slievenamon for the honour of Finn's hand. There was a splendid wedding at Tara; but as Gráinne sat at the feast, she looked at the man she had just married, and saw that the weight of years was on him; and then she looked about the board and noticed a "freckled, sweet-worded man, who had the curling, dusky black hair, and cheeks berry-red," and she asked who he was, and she was told that he was Diarmuid, "the white-toothed, of lightsome countenance, the best lover of

women and of maidens that was in the whole world." And Gráinne looked on him again, and her heart melted in her bosom; and she mixed a drink and sent it about the board, until there came upon all the company "a stupor of sleep and deep slumber."

Then she arose from her seat and went straight to Diarmuid, and laid a bond upon him that he should take her away; and Diarmuid, who was leal to Finn, asked his comrades what he should do, and they all said he must bide by the bond she had laid on him, for he was bound to refuse no woman, though his death should come of it.

"Is that the counsel of you all to me?" asked Diarmuid.

"It is," said Ossian and Oscar and all the rest; and then Diarmuid rose from his place, and his eyes were wet with tears, and he said farewell to his comrades, for he knew that from that day he was no longer a member of the goodly company of the Fianna, but only a hunted man.

And he and Gráinne fled from Tara to Athlone, and crossed the Shannon by the ford there, with Finn's trackers close behind them; and for a year and a day they travelled through the length and breadth of Ireland; and every night Diarmuid built for his love a chamber of mighty stones, and carpeted it with sweet grass, and crept softly in beside her and held her in his arms till morning, so that no hurt might come to her. And there the chambers remain to this day, 366 of them, to prove the story true.

I wish I could tell the remainder of the legend, but there is no space here; besides you will find it and

many others like it very beautifully told in one of the most fascinating Irish books I know—Stephen Gwynne's "Fair Hills of Ireland"; a book which I have pillaged remorselessly, and which I recommend to every one planning to visit the Island of the Saints.

There are really more than 366 of the cromlechs, though nobody knows the exact number; and they are the most venerable monuments reared by man in Ireland. The growth of peat around certain of them proves that they have stood where they now stand for at least four thousand years. How the huge covering stones, sometimes weighing hundreds of tons, were lifted into place, no one knows, just as no one knows how the Egyptians raised their great monoliths from the quarry.

There are two most impressive cromlechs at Carrowmore, quite close together, and my pictures of them are opposite the next page. The first one we came to stands near the road in a pasture, and it was merely a question of clambering over a wall to get to it; but to reach the other, it was necessary to cross a newly-cultivated field; and as there were some men working in it, I asked permission to do so.

"Ah," said one of them, "so it is the big stones you have come to see. You're very welcome. I only wish you could take them with you."

"So do I," I said. "We haven't anything like them in America. Everybody would want to see them."

"That is just the trouble here. There are always people coming to see them, and they tramp about over my field, with no thought of the damage they will be doing, and without asking my leave, as you have done.

And then it is at least half an acre of good land that the stones make good for naught, and good land is not that plentiful in Ireland that we can afford to waste any of it. And then there's the trouble of ploughing around them."

The farmer was right, in a way, for a half acre of good land would have been of far more value to him than this beautiful cromlech in the midst of its circle of stones; but how happy I would have been to give it half an acre, if I could have wafted it home to America! The circle is considerably more than a hundred feet in diameter, and the stones which compose it are great boulders, four or five feet high, set on end. The cromlech itself is very imposing, with massive side supports, six or seven feet high, and a mighty covering stone, flat on the under side. It is like a giant bestriding the landscape; and Betty remarked that it reminded her of the legs of Uncle Pumblechook, with several miles of open country showing between them. My picture of it has Knocknarea in the background, and if you look closely, you will see the little bump in the middle of its summit which is the cairn of Queen Meave.

The hill was only a mile or so away, and I proposed going over to it, but Betty vetoed that, for it meant some stiff climbing, and we had already walked a good many miles; so we started back slowly along the road to Sligo, and a beautiful road it was, with the purple hills in the distance, and the green rolling fields on either side, and the whitewashed cottages gathered close beside it. And the doors of all of them were wide open, and the people who lived in them, hearing

CROMLECHS AT CARROWMORE

our footsteps, came out to pass the time of day and make some comment on the weather; and one old woman, who had been hoeing her potatoes, was so eager to talk that we stopped and sat down on the low wall in front of her cottage, and stayed for half an hour.

She began with the usual questions—where we were from, if we were married, how old we were, and so on; and then she started to tell us about herself, omitting no detail, however intimate.

"I have been to America," she said; "for seven years I lived there, and a grand place it is; and you will be wondering why I ever came back to County Sligo. 'Twas because of this bit of land, which would be mine, and this houseen, which is a poor one, but I was born there, and I will die there, glory be to God. I would ask you in, but it is that dirty, I am ashamed of it. There is so much to be done in the field that I have had no time for the house; besides, I am getting old and my legs are very bad. I got a bottle from the doctor, and I do be taking a sip of it now and then, but it does me no good. I am thinking there is nothing will cure me.

"We were not always down in the world like this," she rattled on. "There was a time when we were well off. That was before my man was hurted. He was a county councillor, then, and as handsome a man as you would be seeing in a day's walk; and many's the time he has gone to Dublin with a flower in his button-hole, and me looking after him with pride, for he was always a good head to me. But a horse kicked him, and broke his leg and his arm, and he has

not had the right use of either since; and so we started going down; and when one starts doing that, there's no stopping.

"That's himself going there," she added, indicating an unkempt figure limping painfully along the road with the help of a heavy cane. "He's ashamed for you to see him, he's that dirty;" but curiosity proved stronger than pride, in the end, and he finally came hobbling up to us, a wreck of a man with dirty clothes and unkempt hair and unshaven face and battered derby hat—and yet one could see that he had been a handsome fellow once.

We mentioned our stopping at the house of the bachelor who owned Tricker, and both our companions grew serious.

"Ah, poor boy," said the woman, "he does be havin' a hard time. There was no one but his mother—all the others had gone to America; and he looked after her as careful as a daughter could; but she was very feeble, and he come home from the field one day to find her dead on the hearth. She had fallen in the fire and burned, bein' too weak to get up. It was a great shock to him, her dyin' in a way so painful and without a priest; and we all felt for him, though he was to blame for not marryin' some girl who could have looked after the old woman. He is well off, but there's no girl could put the comether on him, though many have tried,—nice girls, too, as nice as ever put a shawl across their heads."

I remarked that we had been surprised at the number of bachelors in Ireland; we had supposed that all Irishmen married and had "long families," but it was not

so at all. Some were too poor to marry, and that we could understand; but many that were not poor preferred to stay single. There were the Rafferty brothers, owners of the Connemara marble quarry; there was the proprietor of the hotel at Castleconnell; and now here was this man.

"It is so," the old woman agreed. "There be many bachelors hereabouts—men too who could well afford to take a wife. The priest gets very warm over it. Not long ago, he said some words about it in the church —he said if it was left to him, he would be puttin' all these bachelors in a boat with a rotten bottom, and sendin' them out to sea, and sink or swim, small loss it would be whatever happened. For he said they were poor creatures, who thought of nothing but their own pleasure, who wasted their money in Dublin, instead of raising a family with it, and who would come to no good end. And I'm thinking that was nothing to what he had been saying to them in private. For of course, before he said anything in public, he had been after them to let him speak to the fathers of some of the nice girls there be about here."

Among the Irish, especially the Irish peasantry, marriage is still largely a matter of arrangement between the families of the young people; though I doubt if it is ever quite so carelessly done as in one of Lever's books, where, after the bargain has been made, the father of three daughters asks the suitor which one it is he wants, and the suitor has them all brought in so that he may inspect them before he makes up his mind. It is always a solemn occasion, however, with the suitor's relatives ranged along one side of a table, and

the bride's relatives along the other—male relatives, be it understood, for it is not lucky for a woman to take part in a match-making; and the bargaining is very shrewd and quite without sentiment; but the marriages thus arranged usually turn out well. For, if they are without romance, they are also without illusion. The woman knows beforehand what will be expected of her as wife and mother; the man is quite aware that matrimony has its rough side; and so there is no rude awakening for either. It is really a partnership, in which both are equal, and which both work equally hard to make successful.

But I suspect that, in Ireland as elsewhere, marriage is not the inevitable thing it once was, especially for the men. It may be, as the priest said, that they have grown selfish and think only of their own comfort; or it may be that their needs have become more complex and their ideals harder to satisfy. Whatever the cause, Ireland certainly has her full share of bachelors.

We went to a picture-show at Sligo, that night, and I have never seen a livelier audience. There was, of course, a cowboy film which was received with the keenest pleasure; and there was a lurid melodrama, which culminated in the hero flinging the villain over a high cliff, at which those present rose to their feet and stamped and cheered; and then King George was shown reviewing the Life Guards, and the crowd watched in moody silence—a silence that was painful and threatening. As the troops marched past, gallant and glittering, a sight to stir the blood, there was not

the suspicion of a cheer or hand-clap—just a strange, breathless silence. We were to witness the same thing thereafter in "loyal" Derry—the most convincing evidence imaginable of the feeling toward England which every Irishman, Protestant or Catholic, carries deep in his heart.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LEACHT-CON-MIC-RUIS

We wanted to drive around Lough Gill, a distance of about twenty-five miles, and I had mentioned this project to our landlord the day before, and asked the price of a car. He said it was a long trip and a trying one on a horse, and that the price would be twenty shillings, and I saw the same glitter in his eye which had been there when he named the price of a room.

That afternoon, I happened to see a sign over a shop announcing that posting was done in all its branches. Remembering the glitter in the landlord's eye, I stopped in and asked the woman in charge if a car could be had for the trip around Lough Gill. She said it might, and the price would be twelve shillings, including the driver. I closed with her on the spot, and told her to have the car ready at nine o'clock next morning; and somewhat to my surprise it was; and we set forth on what was to prove one of the most beautiful and adventurous excursions we had had in Ireland.

It was a bright, warm day, and our jarvey, a picturesque old fellow, was quite certain it would not rain; but we put our rain-coats and all our other waterproof paraphernalia in the well of the car, so as to be prepared for the worst; and we elected to go out by the northern shore and come back by the southern one. For a mile or two our road lay through beautiful fragrant woods, and then we came out high above the lake.

There is no prettier lake in Ireland than Lough Gill, with its green islands, and its blue water reflecting the blue sky and the fleecy clouds, and its banks covered with a vegetation almost as varied and luxuriant as that about Killarney, and the purple mountains crowding down upon it—only it is hardly fair to call them purple, for they are of many colours—the grey granite of their towering escarpments gleaming in the sun, the wide stretches of heather just showing a flush of lavender, the clumps of dark woodland clothing the glens, the broad spread of green pastures along their lower slopes, all combining in a picture not soon forgotten. For two or three miles we trotted on with this fairy scene stretched before us, and then we turned back into the hills, for we wanted to see the Leacht-Con-Mic-Ruis, the Stone of Conn the Son of Rush, set up on a neighbouring hilltop as a warning and a sign.

At least, Murray calls it the Leacht-Con-Mic-Ruis, but our driver had never heard of it, though he protested that he knew every foot of the neighbourhood. Perhaps he did not recognise the words as I pronounced them, and as he could not read, it did no good for me to show them to him in the book. So I described it to him as well as I was able, never having seen it myself and having only the vaguest idea what it looked like, as a collection of great standing stones on top of a hill not far away; and still he had never heard of it. He was inclined to turn back to the lake, but I persisted; and finally he stopped a man who was driving a cart in to Sligo, and they talked together awhile in Irish, and then our driver turned up another road, not very hopefully.

It was a very hilly road, and our horse developed an alarming propensity to gallop—a propensity which the driver encouraged rather than strove to check, so that we felt, a good part of the time, as though we were riding to a fire at break-neck speed. The jaunting-car, it should be remembered, is a two-wheeled vehicle, and when the animal between the shafts takes it into his head to gallop, it describes violent arcs through the air. But we hung grimly on, and finally our driver drew up at a house near the roadside.

"'Tis here," he said.

We got down and looked around, but saw nothing that resembled the Leacht-Con-Mic-Ruis; and then a woman came out of the house, and we asked her if she knew where it was, and, wonder of wonders! she did. Most wonderful of all, she had been to see it herself, so she knew where it was not vaguely but precisely, and she told us just how to go. It was on the hill back of the house, and she showed us the path which we must follow, and told us to look out for the rabbit-warrens, or we might sprain an ankle; and we set off through knee-deep heather up over the hill. It was quite a climb, and when we got to the top we saw no standing stones, and I wondered if we were going to miss them, after all; but we pressed on, and then, as we topped the next rise, my heart gave a leap—for there before us was the Leacht-Con-Mic-Ruis—the most remarkable stone enclosure I have seen anywhere, with the exception of Stonehenge—and Stonehenge is more remarkable only because its stones are larger.

In every other way—in extent and in complexity—this enclosure far outranks Stonehenge. Great upright

SLIGO ABBEY FROM THE CLOISTER

THE LEACHT-CON-MIC-RUIS

rocks, lichened and weatherbeaten by the rains and winds of forty centuries, form a rude oblong, about a hundred and fifty feet in length by fifty feet across. It stretches east and west, and at the western end is a square projection like a vestibule, divided into two chambers; while at the eastern end are two smaller oblongs some ten or twelve feet square, and their doorways are two trilithons—that is to say, two great rocks set on end with another rock laid across them, just as at Stonehenge. I despair of trying to picture it in words, but I took two photographs, one of which is opposite the preceding page, and gives some idea of the appearance of this remarkable monument—at least of the trilithons. But it gives no idea of its shape or its extent. There was no vantage point from which I could get a photograph that would do that.

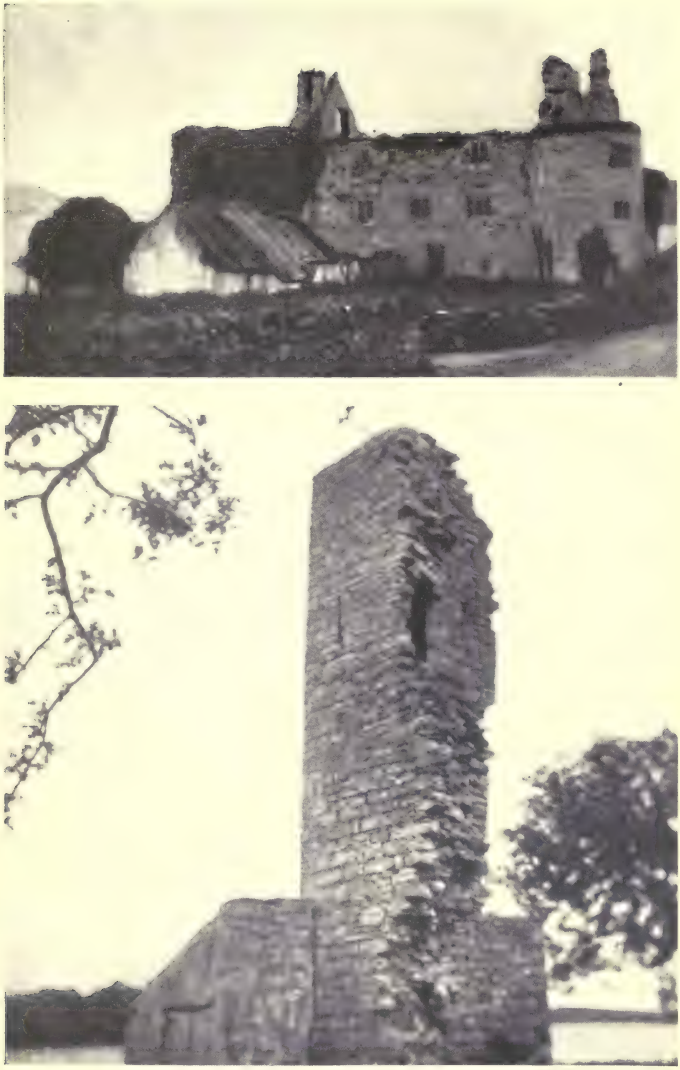
Its effect, here on this bleak hilltop, with other bleak hills all around as far as the eye could see, was tremendously impressive. Nobody knows who built it, nor when it was built, nor why. That it was a shrine of some sort, a holy place, seems evident; and to me it seemed also evident that the holy of holies were those two little chambers back of the trilithic doorways; and it seemed to me also significant that they should be at the east end, nearest the sunrise, just as the altars in Gothic churches are, and that there should be a vestibule or entrance at the west end. Surely it was built with some reference to the sun; and I tried to picture the horde of panting men, who had, with incredible labour, hacked out these giant stones from some quarry now unknown, and pulled them up the steep hillside and somehow manœuvred them into

place. Some powerful motive must have actuated them, and I can think of none powerful enough except the motive of religion—the motive of building a great temple to the God they worshipped, in the hope of pleasing Him and winning His favour.

What strange rites, I wondered, had these old stones witnessed; what pageantries, what sacrifices, what incantations? Of all that ancient people there remains on earth not a single trace, except in such silent monuments of stone as this, so mighty the passing centuries have been powerless to destroy them, more mysterious, more inscrutable than the Sphinx.

We tore ourselves away, at last, and went silently down through the heather, which was fairly swarming with rabbits; and we mounted our car and headed back toward the lake. We came out presently close beside the shore, and followed it around its upper end. Just there, out at the end of a point of land, stands the fragment of a tower, and our jarvey told us it was all that was left of the castle from which Dervorgilla eloped with Dermot MacMurrough—a tale already told by the little tailor of Limerick.

Of course I wanted a picture of it, and after much manœuvring, I managed to get the one opposite this page, which I include only because of the beautiful Japanesy branch across one corner; for this wasn't Breffni's castle at all, as we were presently to find. A little farther on, and quite near the road, was another ruin, and a most imposing one, with drum towers at the four corners, and a dilapidated cottage hugging its wall; and I took a peep within the square enclosure, used now as a kind of barnyard. There were little



A RUIN ON THE SHORE OF LOUGH GILL

THE LAST FRAGMENT OF AN ANCIENT STRONGHOLD

turrets looking out over the lake, and a spiral stair in one corner, and mullioned windows and tall chimneys and yawning fireplaces; and it looked a most important place, but I have not been able to discover anything of its history. Then we went on again, with beautiful views of the lake at our right, and high on our left the flat-topped mountain called O'Rourke's Table, where, once upon a time, as told by the old ballad, "O'Rourke's Noble Feast" was spread:

> O'Rourke's noble fare will ne'er be forgot
> By those who were there, or those who were not.
> His revels to keep, we sup and we dine
> On seven score sheep, fat bullocks and swine,

and so on. It is, indeed, a table fit for such a celebration—a rock plateau with sheer escarpments of grey granite dropping away from it, and a close cover of purple heather for a cloth.

The road curved on along the lake; then turned away from it through a beautiful ravine; and then a sparkling river was dashing along at our right, and beyond it loomed the grey walls of a most extensive ruin; and then we dropped steeply down into the town of Dromahair, and stopped at a pretty inn to bait the horse.

I wanted to get closer to the ruins, and I asked if there was a bridge across the river, and was told that there was, just behind the hotel. So I made my way down to it, to find that the "bridge" was a slender plank, without handrail or guard, spanning some ugly-looking rapids. I looked at the plank, and I looked at the swirling water, and I looked at the grey ruins on the farther shore, and I hesitated for a long time; but

I wasn't equal to it; and I turned away at last and made my way back to the village in the hope of finding some more stable bridge there.

The dominating feature of the village is not the workhouse or lunatic asylum, but an enormous mill, five stories high, built of black stone as hard as flint, to endure for all eternity, but forlorn and deserted; and while I was gazing at it and wondering where the money had come from to build it, a man came out of the house attached to it and spoke to me. He was an Englishman, he said, who was spending his vacation at Dromahair. I asked him if there was any other bridge across the river except the slender plank, and he said there was not; and that it was characteristic of the Irish that there should not be, for a more careless, shiftless, happy-go-lucky race did not exist anywhere on earth.

I asked him about the mill, and he said that it was just another example of Irish inefficiency and wrong-headedness; that it had been erected at great expense and equipped with the most costly machinery to grind American grain, which was to be brought up Sligo Bay from the sea, and up the river and across the lake; and then, when all was ready, there was no grain to grind —or none, at least, which could be brought to the mill without prohibitive expense. Furthermore, the power was so poor and costly that it would have been impossible to operate the mill profitably even if there had been plenty of grain. But the owner of the mill, with some sort of dim faith in the power of Home Rule to produce the grain, was preparing to install a turbine to run the machinery, and had already started

to build a big aqueduct to bring the water in from above the rapids.

The rapids are just above the mill, and are quite imposing; and there, just beyond them, is the abbey. I was near enough to see it fairly well, though not, of course, in detail as I should have liked to do; but I comforted myself with the thought that it is a comparatively modern one, dating from the sixteenth century, when Margaret, the wife of another O'Rourke, having, perhaps, like Dervorgilla, done something she regretted, built it for the Franciscans.

I had another comfort, too; for I asked the Englishman if he had seen the Leacht-Con-Mic-Ruis; and he said that he had been hunting for it for a week, but hadn't been able to find it, as none of the people thereabouts seemed to know where it was; and he was astonished when I told him that we had found it, and commented with envy upon the energy of Americans. He asked me where it was, and I told him as nearly as I could; and then he wanted me to come in and have tea, and was for sending up to the hotel for Betty; but I had to decline that invitation. I think he was lonely and glad to find some one to talk to, for he was unusually expansive for an Englishman; and he said he would send his car in to Sligo after us, if we would come out next day; but I told him we were going on to Bundoran.

And then I left him and went back up the hill to the ivy-covered ruin which was really the castle of Tiernan O'Rourke. It stands on the edge of the hill overlooking the valley—the same valley which lay smiling before him that evening he came back from his

pilgrimage to Lough Derg; and up there was the battlement from which no light burned. It was battered down in the sixteenth century, in some obscure fight, and all that is left of the castle now is the shell of its walls.

I am afraid Tom Moore, as well as O'Connell, journeyman tailor, has invested the story with a glamour which did not belong to it; for Tiernan O'Rourke was a one-eyed bandit who had sacked the abbey of Clonard a few years before, and who certainly had need of pilgrimages to shrive him from his sins; and Dervorgilla, so far from being a "young false one," was forty-two years old; and MacMurrough took care to carry off, not only the lady's person, but all her movable property, and most of her husband's, as well.

The clouds were gathering in the west as we set out from Dromahair, and presently the rain began to slant down, slowly and softly at first, and then in a regular torrent. I do not know when I have seen it rain harder; but we were soon fixed for it and didn't mind. Dromahair is about twelve miles from Sligo, and they are hilly miles, so we knew that we had at least three hours of this wet work ahead of us; but the people working in the fields or plodding along the road paid no attention to the rain, so why should we? In fact, most of them, though without any sort of protection, seemed to be quite unconscious that it was raining at all.

And then, just when the rain was hardest, I saw to the left a circle of stones crowning a little hill, and I knew it was a cashel. A cashel, as I have explained

already, is a fort made of stones, just as a rath is a fort made of earth, both being in the form of a circle; and I knew I could get pictures of raths without much difficulty, but I didn't know when I would see another cashel; so I made the driver stop, and got my camera out of the well, and started off through a field to get a picture of this one, not heeding Betty's anxious inquiry if I had suddenly gone mad.

That field into which I plunged was thigh-deep with dripping grass, and I didn't realise how wet it was until I was well into it, and then there was nothing to do but go on. So I scrambled up the hill and took two pictures, shielding my lens, as well as I could, against the driving rain; and I hadn't any idea that the pictures would be good ones, but they were, and one of them is opposite the next page.

There was no vantage point from which I could take a picture which would show the circular shape of the cashel; but it had been built in a perfect circle about sixty feet in diameter. It was on top of a steep hillock, of which it occupied nearly the whole summit. The walls, pierced only by a single narrow entrance, were about six feet high, and four or five feet thick, and the lower stones were very massive, as the picture shows. They had been roughly dressed and laid without mortar—the ancient Irish knew nothing of mortar, apparently, for all these old stone circles are uncemented; but they had been so nicely fitted that they were still in place after many centuries, though the clambering ivy was doing its best to pull them down.

Right in the middle of the circle was a great stone

slab, flush with the ground. The only use I could imagine for it was as a base for a shrine or altar; but as I went down to the road again, an old man came out of a little house to talk, and he said that some antiquarians from Sligo, who believed the slab covered the entrance to a secret passage, had taken it up and found beneath it, not a passage, but a beautifully fitted pavement; and that the parish priest, investigating on his own account, had dug up some wood ashes, and so decided that this was the place where the fire was built.

"But no one knows," my informant rambled on. "Maybe some day some wise man like yourself will be able to tell us what it was for."

I remarked that the man who did so would have to be far wiser than I; but he protested that he knew a wise man when he saw one; and I suspect that there is a blarney stone in some of these ruins, which the general public doesn't know about.

I was sorry it was raining, for there was another cashel on a hill to the right, and a great rath a little farther off, and I should have liked to explore both of them; but really the weather was too bad, so I went back reluctantly to the car, which our jarvey had driven close under a clump of trees for shelter, and we were soon jogging contentedly on again.

The valley which slopes down here to Lough Gill seems very fertile, and the little farms have a more prosperous look than is usual in Ireland. This is partly due to the fact that a number of neat labourers' cottages have been built to replace the usual tumbledown hovels, and still more are going up.

A CASHEL NEAR DROMAHAIR

ST. PATRICK'S HOLY WELL

This erection of labourers' cottages, which is going on to-day all over Ireland, seems to me almost as important as land purchase. If there is any class of Irish more deserving of pity than another, it is the agricultural labourer. He is worse off than the tenants; he has no land, however poor, to cultivate, except perhaps a tiny patch in front of his door; he has no means of livelihood except the unskilled labour of his hands; if he can manage to earn ten shillings a week he is unusually fortunate. In most cases, his average income throughout the year will be scarcely half that. So naturally the labourers and their families live in the most wretched of all the wretched hovels, in want, discomfort and peril of disease.

It is for the relief of these unfortunate people that the new houses are being built. They are very plain; but they have large windows which can be opened, and stone floors which can be cleaned, and tight slate roofs, and sanitary outbuildings; and each of them has a half acre or so of garden, where vegetables enough to support the family can be raised during the summer; and they rent for from two to three shillings a week —just enough to pay interest on the amount invested in the house, with a small sinking fund for upkeep and repairs. The money needed is borrowed from the government by the county council, and the council has control of the houses, decides where they shall be built, what rent shall be asked for them, and exercises a general supervision over the tenants.

The same thing is being done in the towns, where the insanitary dwellings of the poorer artisans are being replaced by comfortable houses, rented at a very low

rate. Nearly a hundred thousand of these cottages have been built within the past ten years, replacing as many insanitary shacks, which, for the most part, have been torn down. The shacks were much more picturesque, but nobody regrets them. And the severely utilitarian aspect of the new dwellings will no doubt soon be masked with vines and climbing roses.

It was such cottages as this, then, that gave the valley sloping down to Lough Gill an unusually prosperous appearance, and many more were in course of erection throughout the neighbourhood. We padded past them, along the road above the lake, between beautiful hedgerows, gay with climbing roses; and then we turned away through a luxuriant wood, where the bracken was almost waist-high and the trees were draped with moss and ferns, just as we had seen them along the southern coast. And then we passed through a gate and jolted down a very rough and narrow lane; and finally our driver stopped at the edge of a wood, and pointed to a path running away under the trees.

"'Tis the path to St. Patrick's holy well," he said; and we clambered down, and made our way under the trees and up the hillside, and there before us was the well.

It is a lively spring, which bubbles up from the ground in considerable volume, fills a deep basin, and then sparkles away down into the valley. A wall has been built around it, with an opening on one side, and steps by which one may descend and drink of the magic water. Just above it on the hillside is a shrine, something like the one we had seen at St. Senan's well—

really an altar, where, I suppose, Mass may be celebrated; and it was crowded with figurines of the Virgin and small crucifixes and rosaries and sacred pictures, and the bushes all about were tied with rags and strings and other tokens which the pilgrims to the shrine had left behind.

This well is a very famous one, and the number of pilgrims who come to it prove how general is the belief in its powers. It is really a belief in the power of prayer, for prayer is always necessary. I tried to get a picture of the well and the shrine above it, but it was very dark under the trees, and there was no place where I could rest my camera for a time exposure; but the photograph opposite page 408, is better than I had any reason to expect.

We found that the rain had ceased when we came out from under the trees, and we jogged happily back to the highroad and on towards Sligo; and presently far ahead the bay opened out, rimmed by romantic hills, green nearly to the summit, and then culminating in steep escarpments of grey rock; and beneath us in the valley lay the roofs and spires of the town, and we were soon rattling through its streets.

We went back to the hotel to change out of our wet things and get a cup of hot chocolate; and then we took a last stroll about the streets, and stopped to see the church of St. John, said to be older than the abbey, but recently restored and now used by a Church of Ireland congregation. The graveyard about it is full of interesting tombs, and the street it fronts is one of the most romantic in the town. Indeed, the whole town

is interesting; its greatest drawback for the visitor being the beggars who infest it, and who are nearly as pertinacious as those at Killarney.

We went back to the hotel, at last, and told the proprietor that we were going to Bundoran by the four o'clock train.

"You will make a great mistake," he protested, "to leave Sligo without going around Lough Gill."

It was then I had my revenge.

"We have been around Lough Gill," I explained sweetly. "That's where we were this morning."

It is no easy task to travel along the west coast of Ireland. The great bays which indent it, running far inland, and the mountain ranges which tower one behind the other, make it impossible to follow anything like a straight line. The only thing to do is to zigzag around them. Our journey, that afternoon, was a striking example of this. Bundoran lies twenty-two miles north along the coast from Sligo; but to get there by rail, it was necessary to travel ninety-two—forty-eight miles north-eastward to Enniskillen, and then forty-four miles westward to the coast again.

The road to Enniskillen parallels Lough Gill, though it is so hemmed in by hills that we caught no glimpse of the water; and then proceeds across a dreary bog, climbing up and up with a wide valley opening to the south; and then runs into woodland and even orchards —the first, I think, that we had seen in Ireland; and then drops down toward Enniskillen, whose name lives in English history as that of one of the most famous of its regiments. It is said to be a pretty town, nestling

between two lakes and entirely water-girt; but we did not stop to see it.

We changed instead to the Bundoran line, which runs along the northern shore of Lough Erne; and we found the train crowded with people, on their way to spend the week-end at that famous resort; at least so we supposed, but when we got to Pettigoe, there was a crowd on the platform, waving flags and shouting, and as the train stopped somebody set off a series of bombs; and most of the passengers piled out of the train to take part in the celebration; and then we saw a man and woman standing rather sheepishly in front of another man, who was evidently delivering an address of welcome. We asked the guard what it was all about, and he said that the citizens of Pettigoe were welcoming home a fellow-townsman who had gone to Australia and won a fortune and also a wife—or perhaps I should put it the other way around—and had come back to Pettigoe to live.

I was half-inclined to get off there myself, in order to visit St. Patrick's Purgatory, a famous place of pilgrimage on an island in Lough Derg, five miles away; but from the map it looked as though it would be possible to drive over from Donegal, which would be much more convenient. I found out afterwards that there is a mountain range between Donegal and Lough Derg, and no direct road over it; so we did not get to visit the island where, so legend says, St. Patrick had a vision of purgatory, and which became so celebrated that pilgrims flocked to it from all over Europe. The time prescribed for the ceremonies is from the first of June to the middle of August, and the island is often

so crowded with penitents performing the rounds that visitors are not permitted to land.

Our train moved on, after the address of welcome was concluded, and we could see the blue waters of Lough Erne stretching away to the south, while westward the sun was setting in a glory of crimson clouds; and presently the broad estuary of the Erne opened below us, hemmed in with high banks of yellow sand; and then we were at Bundoran—a bathing resort, consisting of a single street of boarding-houses facing the sea; and a little farther on, a great hotel, built on a projecting point of the cliffs. As we paused at its door to look about us, we realised that we had come very far indeed from primitive Connemara, for the first thing which met our eyes was a huge sign:

BEWARE OF GOLF BALLS!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WINDING BANKS OF ERNE

THE weather god was certainly good to us in Ireland. The occasional showers and two or three heavy downpours were merely short interludes, and by no means unpleasant ones, in the long succession of sweetly beautiful days which I remember when I run my mind back over those delightful weeks. That day at Bundoran was one of them, soft and fragrant and altogether perfect.

There is nothing Irish about Bundoran except its climate—not, at least, if one stays at the hotel which has been built there by the Great Northern Railroad, and which is one of the most satisfactory hotels I was ever in. And perhaps it would be as well to say a word here about Irish hotels.

The small, friendly inn, which is one of the delights of European travel, does not exist in Ireland; or, if it does, it is so carelessly managed that it is not endurable. Commercial hotels are also apt to be inferior. The only hotels that are sure to be pleasant and satisfactory are the large ones which cater to tourist traffic. In the more important towns, of course, there is never any difficulty in finding a good hotel; in the smaller towns, the only safe rule is to go to the best in the place, and if there is one managed by the railway, that is usually the one to choose.

Some years ago, the Irish railways realised that

the surest way to encourage tourist traffic in the west and south was to provide attractive hotel accommodations, and they set about doing this with the result that the traveller in Ireland is now well provided for. Such hotels as those at Bundoran, Recess and Parknasilla—and there are many others like them, handsome buildings, splendidly equipped, set in the midst of beautiful surroundings—leave nothing to be desired. Nor are their rates excessive, considering the excellent service they offer, averaging a little over three dollars a day. In the smaller towns, the tariff is considerably less than this, though the service is almost as good. In places where the railroad does not itself own or manage a hotel, it usually sees to it that at least one under private management is kept up to a satisfactory standard. So no one wishing to explore Ireland need hesitate on account of the hotels. They will be found, with a few exceptions, surprisingly good.

The hotel at Bundoran is set close to the edge of the scarred and weather-beaten cliffs, which look right out over the Atlantic toward America. It was along the top of these cliffs that we set out, that Sunday morning, and below us lay the strand where three galleons of the Spanish Armada went to pieces, as they were staggering homewards from the battle in the Channel. From time to time, an effort is made to find these "treasure ships," but, though cannon and anchors and such-like gear have been recovered, no one as yet has found any treasure.

The great waves which roll right in from the Atlantic, and which proved too much for the galleons, have worn the cliffs into the most fantastic shapes; and a

THE COAST AT BUNDORAN

THE HOME OF "COLLEEN BAWN"

little way above the hotel there is a natural arch, called the Fairy Bridge, some twenty-five feet wide, which the water has cut in the rocks. When the tide comes in, it may be seen boiling and bubbling below the bridge, as in a witch's cauldron. Most beautiful of all is a wide yellow strand, a little farther on, with the rollers breaking far out and sweeping in, in white-topped majesty. We sat for a long time watching them, rolling in in long lines one behind the other; and then we scrambled down to the beach through the bare and shifting dunes. Seen thus from below, the black cliffs are most impressive.

We went on again, at last, over the upland toward a wide-flung camp, where the Fourth Inniskillens were getting their summer practice; and one of the men directed us how to find a cromlech and a cairn, which we knew were there somewhere, but which we were unable to see amid the innumerable ridges. From the cairn, which crowns a little eminence overlooking the Erne estuary, there was supposed to be, so our acquaintance said, an underground passage to the other side of the river, where stands the old castle of the Ffolliotts; but as the estuary is at least a mile wide, I doubt if this ever existed except in the imagination of the country-side. The castle is there, however,—we could see its towers looming above the trees; but there was no way to get to it, that day, for the river lay between. I was determined to see it closer before we left the neighbourhood, because it was from that castle that the fair Colleen Bawn eloped with Willy Reilly.

Farther down the stream, a two-masted schooner lay wrecked beside a sand-bank, and across from us

some soldiers were fishing in tiny boats, while a company was going through some manœuvres on the shore, so far away they looked like a company of ants deploying this way and that. For a long time we watched them; then we bade our companion good-bye, and went slowly back through the bracken, where Betty picked a great bouquet of primroses and violets and blue-bells; and we stumbled upon another ancient burial-place; and stopped at the ruins of an old church; and got back finally to the hotel to find the golf-links full of industrious players.

Betty got into talk with the owner of a shaggy English sheep-dog—shaggy clear to its feet, and looking for all the world like Nana, the accomplished nurse of the Darling children; and I went on down to the beach to watch the tide come in. It was swirling threateningly about the black rocks; and out at the farthest point of them I found a man sitting. He invited me to sit down beside him, and we fell into talk. He was a handsome old fellow, a barrister from Dublin, who had come clear across Ireland (which isn't as far as it sounds) to get a breath of sea air. There was no air like the Bundoran air, he said, and two or three days of it did him a world of good. And then we began to talk about Ireland; and I was guilty of the somewhat banal remark that, before Ireland could make any real progress, life there would have to be made attractive enough to keep her young people at home, for she could never hope to get ahead as long as her best blood was drained away from her.

He pooh-poohed the idea.

"The best advice you can give any Irish man or Irish

girl," he said, "is to leave the country the first chance they get; and that will always be good advice, because there will never be anything here for them to do. All this talk about the revival of industry is foolish. You can't revive what's dead; and industry here has been dead for three hundred years. Besides this is an agricultural country, and it will never be anything else; and over wide stretches of it, grazing pays better than tillage will ever do, so grazing there will be. Home Rule will make no difference—how can it? I suppose we're going to get it, and I'll be glad to see it come, if only to stop this ceaseless agitation; but as for its reviving any industries, or increasing wages, or making Ireland a place for ambitious young people to live in—I don't believe it."

"You don't foresee a roseate future, then?"

"Not for Ireland. All these schemes for land purchase and new cottages and pensions and so on may make life here a little more comfortable than it has been; but this country has been in a lethargy for centuries, and it will never be shaken off. The Irish have no ambition; they just live along from day to day without any thought for the future; and they will always be like that. It's their nature."

He would doubtless have said more to the same effect, for he was very much in earnest, but the rising tide drove us in, and I did not see him again.

The picturesque old town of Ballyshannon is only a few miles from Bundoran, and we took train for it next morning, after a last stroll along the cliffs and a look at the "rock-pool," a treasure-house of fossils and

marine growths of every kind. First of all, we wanted to see the Colleen Bawn castle, so we got a car at the station, and set out.

Ballyshannon, after the fashion of Irish towns, is built on the side of a hill, and no horse unaccustomed to mountaineering could have got up the street which leads from the river; but our horse had been reared in the town, so he managed to scramble up; and then we turned to the left and followed along the river to the falls—a dashing mass of spray, where the whole body of water which rushes down from Lough Erne sweeps roaring over a cliff some thirty feet high. Two or three miles along country roads brought us to a gate; and here our driver, looking a little anxious, had a short conference with a woman who lived in a neat labourer's cottage near by; and finally he opened the gate and drove through.

Half a mile along this lane brought us to another gate; and there our driver stopped, and showed us the castle just ahead, and said that was all the farther he could go, and that we would have to walk the rest of the way. There was a certain constraint in his manner which I did not understand till afterwards.

We went on through the gate, and across what had once been the demesne, but had been swept bare of trees, and was now divided between a meadow and a stable-yard, and in a few minutes we stood before the castle which was the scene of a romance very dear to Irish hearts. It is not really a castle, but merely a tall and ugly house, with three bays and a low terrace in front, and it is not very old, since it dates only from 1739, when it was built as the home of the Ffolliotts,

a powerful English family into whose hands this whole neighbourhood had fallen. The Ffolliotts, of course, were Protestants, and Willy Reilly was a Catholic; but Helen Ffolliott was so ill-advised as to fall in love with him, and one night packed up her jewels and eloped. A hue and cry was raised after them, and they were soon captured, and Reilly was thrown into Sligo jail, and it looked for a while as though he might be "stretched," for all this happened about 1745, when the penal laws against Catholics were most severe. But the fair Helen came to the rescue, and swore at the trial that she had been the leader in the affair, not Reilly, and so he escaped with a sentence of banishment. What happened thereafter history does not state; but Will Carleton, who wove a poor romance about the affair, manages to reunite the lovers in the end.

It is not to be wondered at that Reilly became a popular hero. Here was a young and handsome Catholic, who, in the most daring way, had captured the heart of a great Protestant heiress, the daughter of a persecutor of Catholics, and, in addition, a girl so lovely that she was the toast of the whole countryside. The ballad which celebrated the affair had an immense vogue. It is a real ballad, rough and halting, but rudely eloquent. You remember how it starts:

"Oh! rise up, Willy Reilly, and come alongst with me,
I mean for to go with you and leave this countrie,
To leave my father's dwelling, his houses and fine lands;"
And away goes Willy Reilly and his dear Colleen Bawn.

In the ballad, the family is called Folliard, which

is the way the name is still pronounced in the neighbourhood; but the old mansion is now occupied by a tenant. And pretty soon we understood our jarvey's uneasiness, for first a man came to the front door and looked at us, and then went quickly in again; and then an old woman opened the side door, and glared at us, and when we asked if we might have a glimpse of the interior, slammed the door in our faces. I must give her credit, however, for restraining a particularly savage-looking dog eager to be at us. But it was evident we weren't wanted there, for even the turkey gobbler resented our visit, and strutted fiercely about us, trying to scare us out. So we went back to the car, and our jarvey breathed a sigh of relief when he saw us.

"Sure, I didn't know whether you'd come back alive or not," he said. "The master is away from home the day, and the woman that does work for him wouldn't be above settin' the dog on you. But it's all right, glory be to God," and he climbed up to his box and drove us back to Ballyshannon.

We left our luggage at the station of the Donegal narrow-gauge railway, and then walked down into the town. We found it a quaint place, with the friendliest of people; and we were fortunate in discovering a clean inn on the main street, where we had the nicest of lunches, after which we set off to see the abbey.

The road to the abbey lies through a deep, romantic dell, at the bottom of which we found a grain mill working, its great wheel turned by the brook which rushes through the glen; and a little farther on were four or five other mills, all fallen to decay, their wheels

mere skeletons, and their machinery red with rust. Just beyond, a little higher up the hill, stands all that is left of the abbey, a few shattered fragments of the old walls. Yet the abbey was, in its day, a great foundation, patronised by the mighty Prince of Tyrconnell, and taking its name of Assaroe from the falls in the river—Eas Aedha Ruaidh, the Waterfall of Red Hugh, who was High King of Erin about three centuries before Christ, and who was swept over the falls and drowned while trying to cross the ford above them. A boy who played about the ruins described them, when he grew to manhood, in a musical stanza:

Grey, grey is Abbey Assaroe, by Ballyshanny town,
It has neither door nor window, the walls are broken down;
The carven stones lie scattered in briars and nettle-bed;
The only feet are those that come at burial of the dead.
A little rocky rivulet runs murmuring to the tide,
Singing a song of ancient days, in sorrow, not in pride;
The bore-tree and the lightsome ash across the portal grow,
And heaven itself is now the roof of Abbey Assaroe.

We had heard certain legends of underground passages, which could still be explored, and we asked an old man who was cutting grass in the graveyard if he knew anything about them, and he said that he did not. We remarked that it was a hard task cutting the grass around the gravestones; and he said it was so, and would not be worth doing but that the grass was given to him for the cutting; but the guardians were unreasonable men who wanted it cut long before it was ready—it ought really to stand a week longer, now, but them ones would not wait!

We went back past the mill, and met a man in flour-

besprinkled clothes, who bade us good-day and stopped to talk; and it proved to be the miller. He invited us in to see the mill, which was grinding Russian corn, very red and hard, into yellow meal which was used for feeding cattle. We tried to tell him something of the delights of corn-bread and griddle-cakes, but he was plainly sceptical.

He was an Ulster man, and had been running the mill for three years, but he said it was a hard struggle to make both ends meet. If it was not that his power cost him nothing, he would have had to give it up long ago. Power apart, I could imagine no poorer place for a mill, for it was at least two miles from the railway, and the road into the hollow was so steep that it must be a terrific struggle to get a loaded wagon into or out of it. There had been a number of mills in the neighbourhood at one time, but they had all given up the struggle long ago, except one flour mill, which had somehow managed to survive.

We told him that we had seen the ruins of some of them as we went to the abbey.

"Have you been to the abbey?" he asked. "Did you see the underground passages?"

"Are there really some?"

"Come along, and I'll show you."

We protested that we didn't want him to leave his work, but he said the mill could take care of itself for awhile; and we started off together up the hill, through a gate to the right, and then knee-deep through the grass to the brook which ran at the bottom of the ravine, under the walls of the monastery. And there, sure enough, was the mouth of a passage cut in the solid

rock of the bank. It was about six feet high by three wide, and ran in about a hundred feet, for all the world like the entrance to a mine. How much farther it extended I don't know, for an iron gate had been put across it to keep out explorers; but there can be no doubt that, at one time, it connected with the abbey itself, and formed a secret means of ingress and egress, which was no doubt often very convenient.

And then our guide showed us something else, which was far more interesting. In the penal days, Catholic priests were forbidden to celebate Mass under the severest penalties; but nevertheless they managed to hold a service now and then in some out of the way place, carefully concealed, with sentries posted all about to guard against surprise. A short distance down stream from the entrance to the secret passage was a shallow cave in the cliff, so overhung with ivy that it could scarcely be seen, and here, many times, the Catholics of the neighbourhood had gathered at word that a priest would celebrate Mass. On the heights all about lookouts would be placed, and then the men and women would kneel before the mouth of the little cave and take part in the sacrament.

At the back of the cave, the shelf of rock which served as the altar still remains, and at one side of it is a rude piscina—a basin hollowed in the rock, with a small hole in the bottom to drain it; and it was here the vessels used in the celebration of the Mass were washed, after the service was over. I wanted mightily to get a picture of this cave, but it had started to shower, and though I got under the umbrella and made an exposure, the picture was a failure.

We bade our guide good-bye, with many thanks for his kindness, and went slowly back along the highroad toward Ballyshannon; and presently from a tiny cottage beside the road two old women issued and greeted us with great cordiality. They were clean and neatly dressed, and the younger one, who did most of the talking, seemed to be quite unusually interested in our private history and solicitous for our welfare, and the blarney with which her tongue plastered us was the most finished I have ever listened to. We thanked her for her good wishes, and were about to go on, much pleased at this new demonstration of Irish cordiality, when we had a rude awakening.

"Ah, your honour," she said, "would you not be giving me something for my poor sister here? You see she is all twisted with rheumatism, and can scarcely walk, and the medicine do be costing so much that she often must go without it. Just a small coin, God bless ye."

I didn't want to give her anything, for I suspected that she made a practice of waylaying passers-by and begging from them; and then I looked at the older woman, who was standing by with her hands crossed before her, and I saw how the fingers were twisted and withered and how the face was drawn with pain—so I compromised by dropping sixpence into the outstretched hand.

"If your honour would only be makin' it eightpence now," the woman said quickly; "we can get three bottles of castor-oil for eightpence—"

But the other woman stopped her.

"No, no," she protested; "take shame to yourself for askin' the kind gentleman for more. We thank your honour, and God bless ye, and may He bring ye safe home."

And the other woman joined in the blessings too, and they continued to bless us, considerably to our embarrassment, until we were out of ear-shot.

Betty had had enough of Ballyshannon; besides, the showers were coming with increasing force and frequency; so she elected to go back to the railway station and rest, while I wandered about for a last look at the town. And now, I suppose, I shall have to say a word about its history.

All this country to the north of Lough Erne is Tyrone—Tir Owen, the Province of Owen—and was once a great principality, which stretched eastward clear to the shore of the Channel about Belfast. Northwest of it, answering roughly to the present county of Donegal, was Tyrconnell—Tir Connell, the Province of Connell; and Connell and Owen were brothers, sons of Nial of the Nine Hostages, who was King of Ireland from 379 to 405, and whose eight sons cut Ireland up between them into the principalities which were, in time, by their own internecine warfare, to make Ireland incapable of defending herself against the invader. Saint Patrick, about 450, found Connell in his castle on Lough Erne and baptised him; and then he journeyed north to Owen's great fortress, which we shall see before long on a hill overlooking Lough Swilly, and baptised him.

Five centuries later, when Brian Boru had brought

all Ireland to acknowledge his kingship, he decreed that every family should take a surname from some distinguished ancestor, and so began the era of the O's and the Macs. The two great clans of Tyrone and Tyrconnell chose the names of O'Neill and O'Donnell, and the river Erne was the frontier of the O'Donnell domain. There was a ford here at Ballyshannon, and so, of course, a castle to guard it, and many were the herds of lifted cattle which the O'Donnells, sallying south into Sligo, drove back before them into Donegal. Cattle was the principal form of property in those old days—about the only kind, at least, that could be stolen —and so it was always cattle that the raiders went after.

The English brought a great force against the place in 1597, and for three days besieged the castle and tried unavailingly to carry it by assault; and then the O'Donnell clans poured down from the hills, and the English, seeing themselves trapped, tried to cross the river at the ford just above the falls; and the strongest managed to get across, but the women and the wounded and the weak were swept away.

There is no trace remaining of the castle, but just below the graceful bridge of stone which crosses the river is the ford over which the English poured that day, and an ugly ford it is, for the water runs deep and strong, quickening at its lower edge into the rapids above the falls. From the centre of this bridge, some twenty-five years ago, the ashes of one of Ireland's truest poets were scattered on the swift, smooth-running water and carried down to the sea, and a tablet marks the spot:

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM
A Native of This Town
Born 1824; died 1889.
Here once he roved, a happy boy,
Along the winding banks of Erne,
And now, please God, with finer joy,
A fairer world his eyes discern.

It is certainly a halting quatrain, quite unworthy the immortality of marble. A couplet from Allingham's own poem in praise of his birthplace would have been far more fitting; but I suppose that the lines on the tablet were composed by some local dignitary, and that nobody dared tell him how bad they were. I know of no more graceful tribute to any town than Allingham paid to Ballyshannon in his "Winding Banks of Erne." The first stanza gives a savour of its quality:

Adieu to Ballyshanny, where I was bred and born;
Go where I may, I'll think of you, as sure as night and morn:
The kindly spot, the friendly town, where everyone is known,
And not a face in all the place but partly seems my own;
There's not a house or window, there's not a field or hill,
But east or west, in foreign lands, I'll recollect them still;
I leave my warm heart with you, though my back I'm forced to turn—
Adieu to Ballyshanny, and the winding banks of Erne.

You will note that the savour is the same as that of the lines I have already quoted describing Abbey Assaroe, and of course the same hand wrote them. I wish I could quote the whole poem to Ballyshannon, for it is worth quoting, but one more stanza must suffice, the last one:

If ever I'm a moneyed man, I mean, please God, to cast
My golden anchor in the place where youthful years were passed;
Though heads that now are black or brown must meanwhile gather grey,
New faces rise by every hearth, and old ones drop away—
Yet dearer still that Irish hill than all the world beside;
It's home, sweet home, where'er I roam, through lands and waters wide.
And if the Lord allows me, I surely will return
To my native Ballyshanny, and the winding banks of Erne.

His birthplace is not far away—one of a row of plain old stone houses standing in the Mall, with a tablet:

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM
Poet
Born in This House
19th March, 1824

I walked on past it, down to the river below the falls, where, close to the water's edge, a seat has been placed under a rustic canopy, and I sat there for a long time and watched the foaming water rushing over the cliff, with a crash and roar which, as Allingham says, is the voice of the town, "solemn, persistent, humming through the air day and night, summer and winter. Whenever I think of that town, I seem to hear the voice. The river which makes it, runs over rocky ledges into the tide. Before, spreads a great ocean in sunshine or storm; behind stretches a many-islanded lake. On the south runs a wavy line of blue mountains; and on the north, over green, rocky hills, rise peaks of a more distant range."

BIRTHPLACE OF WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

CASTLE DONEGAL

It is up from the ocean the salmon come in the spring, seeking a place to spawn, and before they can get into the "many-islanded lake," they have to pass the falls. It is a ten-foot leap, even at flood-tide; but they take it, and a beautiful sight it must be to see them do it. But I saw none that day. Just below the falls is a little island, Inis-Saimer, said to be the spot where the Firbolgs, the earliest inhabitants of Ireland, first touched foot to Irish soil. It is given over now to some small buildings connected with the fishery, which is very valuable. There were a number of boats out, that day, with fishermen in them patiently whipping the water, but I did not see any fish caught.

Ballyshannon is not, I judge, so prosperous as it once was, for across the river from where I sat were a number of tall mills and warehouses, empty and evidently dropping to decay. But it is more bustling than many other towns in Ireland, and has perhaps not sunk quite so deeply into the Slough of Despond. And then again, as the towering mass of the Belfast Bank in the main street warned me as I walked back through the village, we were getting nearer to the hustling north!

The little train we were to take for Donegal backed up to the platform soon after I reached the station. It is a narrow-gauge road, and the coaches are miniature affairs, scarcely high enough to stand up in, as we found when we entered. And just then the heavens opened, and the rain poured down in sheets. We closed door and windows, and congratulated ourselves that we were snug and dry—and then the other passengers began to arrive, soaked through and dripping wet; and as the train consisted of only two coaches, our

compartment was soon invaded by two women and two girls, whose gowns were fairly plastered to them. They dried themselves as well as they could, but little streams of water continued to trickle off of them for half an hour.

The road runs through a bare, bleak valley for the first part of the way, clinging perilously to the hillside, and then climbs steeply over the watershed into the valley of the Ballintra, which is green and smiling and apparently prosperous; and at last winds down along the shore of Donegal Bay, through a district of orchards and lush meadows and beautiful hedges and comfortable houses, and so into the picturesque town—Dun-na-Gall, the Fort of the Strangers—the ancient seat of the O'Donnells; but to me Donegal, town and county, has one connotation which overshadows all others, and that is with Father O'Flynn. Just where he lived I don't know, but the tribute which Alfred Perceval Graves paid him is the most eloquent ever paid in rhyme to any priest—and, as a comment upon the efforts of selfish politicians to fan the flame of religious bigotry in Ireland, it is worth remembering that it was written by a Protestant! Do you know the poem? Well, if you do, you will be glad to read it again, and if you do not, you will have every reason to thank me for introducing you to it; so, just to give myself the pleasure of writing it, I am going to quote it entire, for it would be a crime to leave out a line of it.

FATHER O'FLYNN

Of priests we can offer a charmin' variety,
Far renowned for larnin' and piety;
Still, I'd advance ye widout impropriety,

Father O'Flynn as the flower of them all.
Here's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,
Slâinte and *slâinte* and *slâinte* agin;
Powerfulest preacher, and
Tinderest teacher, and
Kindliest creature in ould Donegal.

Don't talk of your Provost and Fellows of Trinity,
Famous forever at Greek and Latinity,
Faix! and the divels and all at Divinity—
Father O'Flynn 'd make hares of them all!
Come, I vinture to give ye my word,
Niver the likes of his logic was heard,
Down from mythology
Into thayology,
Troth! and conchology if he'd the call.

Och! Father O'Flynn, you've the wonderful way wid you,
All ould sinners are wishful to pray wid you,
All the young childer are wild for to play wid you,
You've such a way wid you, Father avick!
Still, for all you've so gentle a soul,
Gad, you've your flock in the grandest control,
Checking the crazy ones,
Coaxin' onaisy ones,
Liftin' the lazy ones on wid the stick.

And, though quite avoidin' all foolish frivolity,
Still, at all seasons of innocent jollity,
Where was the play-boy could claim an equality
At comicality, Father, wid you?
Once the Bishop looked grave at your jest,
Till this remark set him off wid the rest:
"Is it lave gaiety
All to the laity?
Cannot the clargy be Irishmen too?"

There is a quaint old inn in Donegal, with dining

and sitting rooms crowded with "curiosities" gathered from the four quarters of the globe by the proprietor, who was once a soldier; and his daughter looks after the comfort of the guests; and we had there that night a most satisfying dinner. And then, as it was still quite light, I filled my pipe and started out to stroll about the town; but I hadn't gone far when I heard a bell being rung with great violence, and when I looked again, I saw the small boy who was ringing it; and when he passed me, I asked him what the matter was, and he handed me a poster, printed most gorgeously in red and black, and these were the first lines of it:

TOWN HALL, DONEGAL
Monday Evg., June 23rd, 1913
MONSTER ATTRACTION
Powerful Performance!
For the Benefit of Mr. Joe Cullen,
The Donegal Old Favourite
On which occasion the ladies and
gentlemen of the Donegal Amateur
Dramatic and Variety Club will
Appear.

Then followed the programme. There were to be four scenes from "The Ever Popular Play Entitled Robert Emmet," also "The Laughable Sketch Entitled The Cottage by the Sea," also "The Irish Farce, Miss Muldowedy from Ireland," the whole to be interspersed with variety turns by members of the club, as well as Mr. Cullen. "Don't Miss This Treat," the poster concluded. "Motto, 'Fun without Vulgarity.' "

Blessing the chance which had brought us to Donegal

upon this day, I hastened back to the hotel, showed the poster to Betty, and three minutes later, we were sallying forth in quest of the town-hall, whose entrance proved to be up a little court just across the street. The prices of admission, so the bill announced, were "2s., 1s. and 6d.," and I consulted with the abashed young man at the door as to which seats we should take. He advised the shilling ones, and we thereupon paid and entered. I wondered afterwards where the two shilling seats were, for the shilling ones were the best in the house.

Although it was nearly time for the performance to begin, we were almost the first arrivals; but we soon heard heavy feet mounting the stair, and quite a crowd of men and boys began to file into the sixpenny seats at the rear. A few girls and women came forward into the shilling seats; but from the look of them, I suspected that they were deadheads, and I fear that Mr. Cullen did not reap a great fortune from that benefit!

There was a tiny stage at one end of the hall, and the stage-manager, after the habit of all such, was having his troubles, for he could not get the footlights—a strip of gas-pipe with holes in it—to work. We thought for a while that he was going to blow himself up, and the whole house along with him; but he gave up the struggle, at last; the pianist played an overture, and the curtain rose.

I have never seen the whole of "Robert Emmet," but from what I saw of it that night, I judge that it must have been written for a star, for nobody does much talking except Emmet himself. He, however, does a lot; and it was fortunate that, in this instance,

he was impersonated by Mr. Cullen, for I am sure none of the other actors could have learned the part. Mr. Cullen proved to be a hatchet-faced old gentleman without any teeth; but he had a pleasing voice, and Emmet's grandiloquent speech from the dock was greeted with applause.

Of the two farces I will say nothing, except that they were really not so bad as one would expect, once the actors had recovered from their embarrassment when they perceived two strangers present; but the feature of the evening was the songs, which were many and various and well-rendered. I remember only one of them, which we then heard for the first time, but which we were to hear many times thereafter, a lilting, catchy air, in which the audience assisted with the chorus, which ran something like this:

It's a long way to Tipperary,
  It's a long way to go;
It's a long way to Tipperary,
  The sweetest land I know.
Good-bye, Piccadilly,
  Farewell, Leicester Square;
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
  But my heart is there.

It is the old, old theme of the Irish exile longing for home; the theme of I know not how many poems, from the time of St. Columba, banished overseas and "thinking long" of

Derry mine, my own oak grove,
Little cell, my home, my love;

down through Father Dollard's lilting "Song of the Little Villages":

The pleasant little villages that grace the Irish glynns
Down among the wheat-fields—up amid the whins;
The little white-walled villages, crowding close together,
Clinging to the Old Sod in spite of wind and weather:
Ballytarsney, Ballymore, Ballyboden, Boyle,
Ballingarry, Ballymagorry by the Banks of Foyle,
Ballylaneen, Ballyporeen, Bansha, Ballysadare,
Ballybrack, Ballinalack, Barna, Ballyclare,

to the tender verses by Stephen Gwynne with which I will close this already, perhaps, too-poetical chapter:

Ireland, oh, Ireland! centre of my longings,
Country of my fathers, home of my heart,
Overseas you call me, "Why an exile from me?
Wherefore sea-severed, long leagues apart?"

As the shining salmon, homeless in the sea-depths,
Hears the river call him, scents out the land,
Leaps and rejoices in the meeting of the waters,
Breasts weir and torrent, nests him in the sand;

Lives there and loves; yet with the year's returning,
Rusting in his river, pines for the sea;
Sweeps down again to the ripple of the tideway,
Roamer of the ocean, vagabond and free.

Wanderer am I, like the salmon of thy rivers;
London is my ocean, murmurous and deep,
Tossing and vast; yet through the roar of London
Reaches me thy summons, calls me in sleep.

Pearly are the skies in the country of my fathers,
Purple are thy mountains, home of my heart:
Mother of my yearning, love of all my longings,
Keep me in remembrance, long leagues apart.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MAIDEN CITY

As far back as its history goes, Donegal was the seat of the O'Donnells, that powerful clan of which the choicest flowers were Hugh Roe and Red Hugh, and here they had their castle, on a small bluff overlooking the waters of the River Eask. It still stands there, remarkably well-preserved considering its vicissitudes, one of the handsomest semi-fortified buildings in existence anywhere. It is by far the most interesting thing to be seen in the town of Donegal, and we set out for it immediately after breakfast next morning.

Donegal we found by daylight to be a pleasant little town, with a single street of two-storied houses curving down over the hill toward the river, and a few narrow lanes branching off from it, after the traditional fashion of the Irish village. The castle is nestled in a bend of the river, which defends it on two sides, and there is still a trace of the moat which used to defend the other two. The best view of it is from the bridge crossing the river, and surprisingly beautiful it is, with its gabled towers and square bartizan turrets and mullioned windows. The picture opposite this page shows how the castle looks from the land side, with one of the square turrets, perfectly preserved; but the mullioned windows are the most striking feature of this side of the building, which was the domestic

side, and so had larger openings than the one overlooking the river, which was more open to attack.

Just when the castle was built no one knows, but it was thoroughly restored and largely added to by Sir Basil Brooke, to whom it was granted after the confiscation in 1610, when the power of the O'Donnells was finally broken. Red Hugh was really the last of the line, and his short life of twenty-eight years was more crowded with adventure than that of most heroes of romance.

He was the son of Hugh O'Donnell, head of the clan, and of a high-spirited daughter of the Lord of the Isles, Innen Dhu Mac Donnell, whom Hugh of the Red Hair resembled in more ways than one. He was kidnapped by the English when only thirteen, and taken to Dublin and imprisoned in the castle there, as a hostage for his father's good behaviour. A year later, he managed to escape; was recaptured, escaped again; and, by remarkable cunning and daring, eluded the pursuers who were close after him, and got through to Donegal.

He arrived there to find a great force of English camped about the place; but, half dead with exposure as he was, he mustered a force of his clansmen, marched on the English and put them to rout—a good beginning for a boy of fourteen. From that time forward, he was the firebrand which kept all Ireland alight against the invaders; but at last, as has happened so frequently in Irish history, a traitor in his own camp overthrew him—his cousin and brother-in-law, Nial Garv the Fierce, who, being older than Hugh, thought that he should have had the O'Donnellship and been

crowned at the Rock of Doon, and so grew jealous of the red haired lad, and ended by going over to the English.

There was red battle between them after that, and the English were treated to the pleasant spectacle of Irishmen slaying each other; but Hugh was called away to Kinsale to join the Spaniards, stopping at Holy Cross on the way, as we have seen, for the Abbot's blessing, and then going on to a ruinous defeat. He went to Spain, after that, to plead for more help, and died there, of poison it is said, at the age of twenty-eight, and lies buried at Valladolid.

His brother, Rory O'Donnell, was recognised by the English and made Earl of Tyrconnell, but at the end of a year or two he found himself so surrounded with intrigue that, in fear for his life, he gathered up such of his belongings as he could and fled the country. O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, fled with him, and this "flight of the earls" was the end of Irish power in the north of Ireland, for their estates were declared forfeit, and divided among adherents of the English court. Nial Garv, who had contributed so much to the O'Donnells' overthrow, put in a claim for their estates, but was arrested and sent to the Tower of London and left to rot there till he died. Such was the end of Donegal as the seat of a Celtic Princedom, for the new prince was an Englishman, Sir Basil Brooke.

It is his imprint you will see upon the castle as it exists to-day—particularly in the great sculptured chimney-piece which stands in what was once the banqueting hall, and which is a marvel of elaborate,

though not very finished, carving. Brooke was a Catholic and a royalist, a supporter of Charles I, and after the fall of that unlucky monarch, was imprisoned in the Tower and his estate declared forfeited to the Parliament. The old castle, now the property of the Earl of Arran, fell gradually to ruin, until to-day only the shell remains.

Next to the chimney-piece, the most interesting feature of the interior is the vaulting of the lower rooms, which are lighted only by narrow slits like loopholes. This vaulting is made of flat stones, an inch or two in thickness, set on edge, and though rough enough, is as firm to-day as the day it was put in place.

As we came out of the grounds, we were accosted by an old man with a flowing white beard, who suggested that we visit his tweed depot, just across the street, and see for ourselves what Donegal tweeds really were. He was so pleasant about it that we couldn't refuse; and to say that we were astonished when we stepped inside his shop would be putting it mildly, for there, in that village of twelve hundred people, was the largest stock of tweeds and other Irish weaves that I have ever seen. The place was fairly jammed with great rolls of cloth; and when we said we weren't especially interested in tweeds, but might be in a steamer-rug, he led us up to a wide balcony and produced rug after rug; beautiful rugs, soft and thick, pure wool in ever fibre. Of course we succumbed!

Mr. Timony, for such was the old man's name, was very proud of his shop, as he had a right to be, and of his American custom. He told us that President

Woodrow Wilson and William Randolph Hearst had both been among his visitors, and he evidently considered them equally distinguished!

It had begun to shower again by the time we tore ourselves away from Mr. Timony, and Betty elected to return to the hotel; but I wanted to see the ruins of the old abbey, a little way down the river, and walked out to it. There is scarcely more left of it than there is of Assaroe—just some fragments of ivy-clad wall standing in the midst of a graveyard, as may be seen from the picture opposite page 438. The graveyard is still used, and when I got there, I found three men trying to decide on the site for a grave, while the diggers stood by, with their long-handled spades, waiting the word to begin. They had a hard time finding a place, for the graveyard is crowded, like most Irish ones, and they wandered about from place to place for quite a while.

That so little is left of the abbey is due to the fact that in 1601, Nial Garv took possession of the place, and Red Hugh besieged him there, and in some way Garv's store of gunpowder exploded and tore the buildings to pieces. All of which is told in that priceless volume of Irish history which was written here, the "Annals of the Four Masters," a book of eleven hundred quarto pages, which, by some miracle of luck, has been preserved. The "four masters" were four monks of the abbey, and it is largely to their labours we owe what history we have of the times in which they lived.

There are a few arches of the cloisters still standing, and they resemble those at Sligo not only in shape and character, but also in the fact that repeated burials

have raised the ground about them many feet above its ancient level, so that what was once a lofty arched doorway can now be passed only by stooping low. Hugh Roe O'Donnell and his wife, Fingalla, who founded the monastery for the Franciscans in 1474, are said to be buried here, but I did not find their graves. There is also a legend that castle and abbey were at one time connected by a secret passage, but I scarcely believe it, for they are a long way apart.

The rain was sheeting down in earnest when I finally left the place, but the gravediggers were bending to their task, quite oblivious of the downpour.

We bade good-bye to Donegal that afternoon, and took train for Londonderry and the "Black North." And it was not long before we realised that we had turned our backs upon the Ireland of the Irish and entered the Ireland of the English and the Scotch—a very different country!

Just outside of Donegal, we witnessed one of those leave-takings, which have occurred a million times in Ireland during the past fifty years. As the train stopped at a little station, we saw that the platform was crowded, and then we perceived the cause. A boy and two girls, some seventeen or eighteen years old, were setting out for Derry to take ship for America, and their relatives and friends had come down to see them off. There were tears in every eye, and if blessings have any virtue, enough were showered on that trio that afternoon to see them safely through life.

The guard came along presently, and hustled them into the compartment ahead of ours—he had seen such

scenes a hundred times, I suppose, and had long since ceased to be impressed by them—and then the three children hung out of the door and took a last look at their people; and then the engine whistled and the train started slowly, and one man, his face working convulsively, began to run along beside it, then suddenly recollected himself, and stopped with a jerk.

The whole country-side must have known that the three were going, for every house for miles had a group of men and women out to wave at them as the train passed; and the exiles waved and waved back, and leaned out and gazed at the country they were leaving, as though to impress its every feature on their minds.

And indeed it is a beautiful country, for the road follows the valley of the Eask, and presently Lough Eask opened before us, lying in a deep basin at the foot of lofty hills—such hills as cover the whole of Donegal and make it one of the most picturesque of Irish counties. Beyond the lake, the line traverses one of the wildest valleys we had seen in Ireland, the Gap of Barnesmore—a bleak, rock-strewn defile, with a little stream running at the bottom and the post-road following its windings; but the railway line has been laid, most perilously it seemed, right along the face of the mountain. There were evidences of land-slips here and there, and it was plain that great boulders were always rolling down, so I should fancy that a sharp watch has to be kept on those five miles of road-bed. But we got across without accident, and the views out over the valley and the Donegal mountains were superb—I only wish we had had time to explore them more thoroughly.

Just beyond the gap, the line passes Lough Mourne, a melancholy little lake set in a framework of bleak hills, and then runs on across a still bleaker moor; but gradually, as the hills are left behind, the character of the country changes, the houses become more numerous, the fields larger and less stony, one sees an orchard here and there—and then, quite suddenly, the whole landscape becomes prosperous and pastoral, and we caught our first glimpse of wide fields covered with a light and vivid green, which we knew was the green of flax. After that, there was no time, until we left Ireland, that this new and lovely tint was not among the other tints of whatever landscape we might be looking at.

We paused for a moment at the prosperous little town of Stranorlar, and then went on northwards, past one village after another, along the valley of the Finn, to Strabane—like Leenane, pronounced to rhyme with "fan." We had an hour or two to wait here, so we walked up into the town, and had lunch at a pleasant inn, and then took a look about the place; and I think it was then we began to realise that the picturesque part of Ireland was behind us. Certainly there is nothing picturesque about Strabane, although it resembles most other Irish towns in having a huge workhouse and jail. But it has also some large shirt-factories, whence came the whirr of machinery, and where we could see the girls and women in long rows bending to their tasks; and it has great ware-houses, not falling to ruin like those of Galway and Westport and Ballyshannon, but filled with merchandise and busy with men and drays. We were so unaccustomed to such a

sight that we stopped and looked at it for quite a while.

It is a fifteen mile run from Strabane to Derry, for the most part along the bank of the Foyle, through a beautiful and prosperous country, with many villages clustered among the trees; and at six o'clock we reached the "Maiden City,"—by far the busiest town we had seen since Dublin. In fact, as we turned up past the old walls and came to the centre of the town, the bustle of business and roar of traffic seemed to me to surpass Dublin; and more than once, when we were settled in our room, the unaccustomed noise drew us to the window to see what was going on. We went out, presently, to see that portion of the town which stands within the ancient walls; but before I describe that excursion, I shall have to tell something of what those walls stand for.

Fourteen hundred years ago—in 546, to be exact—Columba, greatest of Irish saints after Patrick and Brigid, passed this way, and stopping in the oak grove which clothed the hill on which the town now stands, was so impressed with the lovely situation, that he founded an abbey there, which was known as Daire-Columbkille—Columba's Oak-grove.

There was another reason, perhaps, besides the beauty of the spot, which persuaded the Saint to choose this site for his monastery, and that was the nearness of the great fort on Elagh mountain, the stronghold of the Lord of Tyrone. He doubtless hoped that, in the shadow of that mighty cashel, his abbey would be safe from spoliation; but in this he was disappointed, for its position on a navigable river, so close to the sea, made it easy prey to the Danes and the Saxons, and they

sailed up to it time and again and laid it waste. But it grew in importance in spite of repeated burnings, and it held off the English longer than most, for, though it was plundered by Strongbow's men in 1195, and included in the grant to Richard de Burgo, the Red Earl of Ulster, in 1311, it was not until 1609, two years after that "flight of the earls" which left Tyrone and Tyrconnell confiscated to the English, that it was really conquered.

In confiscating this vast domain, as in all previous and subsequent confiscations in Ireland, the English crown proceeded upon the theory that all the land a chief ruled over belonged to that chief; but in Ireland this was not at all the case, for there the land belonged, and always had belonged, not to the chief but to his people. This, however, was not allowed to interfere in any way with its re-apportionment among court favourites and companies of adventurers; and Derry, together with a vast tract of land about it, was granted to the Corporation of London, which thereupon proceeded to re-name it Londonderry, in token of its subserviency. Three years later, the Irish Society for the New Plantation in Ulster was formed, and to it was granted the towns of Coleraine and Londonderry, with seven thousand acres of land and the fisheries of the Foyle and the Bann. The society was pledged to enclose Derry with walls, and these were laid out and built in 1617. They were strong and serviceable, as may be seen to this day, and so wide that a carriage and four could drive along the top of them.

The new colonists were mostly Protestants, and in the war which soon followed between King Charles

and the Parliament naturally chose the Republican side, so that Derry quickly became the centre of resistance to royalty in Ulster. The town prospered under the Commonwealth, but the ups and downs of Irish politics after the Restoration kept it in a perpetual turmoil.

I have already told how, after the fall of Charles I, Cromwell's army conquered Ireland, drove the Irish to the hills west of the Shannon, and divided the fertile land among the Puritan soldiers and the adherents of the Parliament. When Charles II was restored to the throne, part of the price exacted from him for that restoration was the so-called Act of Settlement, in which this division of the land among its Protestant conquerors was confirmed. That the Irish should protest against the injustice of this was natural enough; and that, once seated on the throne, the king should give ear to the protestations was natural too, since the Irish had been his father's allies and had lost their lands in fighting his battles for him. So, while Irish Catholic Ireland brought heavy pressure to bear on the king, English Protestant Ireland was on pins and needles through fear of what might happen. Finally the Cromwellians agreed to surrender a third of the estates in their possession, and on this basis peace of a sort was patched up.

That was in 1665, and it looked for a while as though Protestant and Catholic would thereafter be able to live together in amity, for there was a general revival of industry which resulted in a prosperity the country had seldom known, and a consequent abatement of religious discord. But Charles died, and his

brother, James II, at once proceeded to remodel the Irish army upon a Catholic basis, even going so far as partially to disarm the Protestants, who of course immediately concluded that they were all going to be massacred in revenge for Drogheda.

But James soon found himself facing a rebellion in England, and in 1688 a large force of Irish troops were transported to England to help him hold his throne. Among these troops was the regiment which had been stationed at Derry; and when, alarmed at the attitude of the town, the king attempted to throw another garrison into it, rebellion flamed up swift and fierce, and some apprentice boys seized the keys of the city gates and closed and locked them in the face of the royal army. Enniskillen followed suit, and everywhere throughout the north of Ireland, the Protestants began to form town companies and to arm and drill for their own defence. Thus was organised the first "army of Ulster"! It was soon to be needed—as I hope and believe the latest one will never be!

Certain English leaders, determined to get rid of James at any cost, had invited William Prince of Orange to bring an army to England to restore liberty and rescue Protestantism from the destruction which seemed to threaten it. William, it should be remembered, stood very near the English throne, for his mother was the eldest daughter of Charles I, and his wife was his own cousin, the eldest daughter of Charles's son, James II. William, who had been expecting such an invitation, at once gathered a great army together and landed in England in November. James, finding himself detested and deserted by all

parties, fled to France; and William and Mary were proclaimed King and Queen of Great Britain and Ireland.

Ireland, of course, was still in rebellion. There is no more pathetic page of Irish history than that which tells of Irish loyalty to the Stuarts; for the Stuarts cared nothing for Ireland, but only for themselves, and used the Irish merely as pawns in their selfish struggle for power. The poor Irish stood firm for James, and got a great army together; and James came over from France with a small French force, and together they marched against Derry, which the Protestants still held, but which James expected to capture with little difficulty. The commander at Derry was a man named Robert Lundy, a Protestant and soldier of some experience, but he seems to have been a Jacobite at heart for, after one skirmish near Strabane, he held a council of war, recommended immediate surrender, ordered that there should be no firing, and sent word to James that the city was ready to submit. But he had reckoned without Derry's militant spirit; for when news of his decision got abroad, the people sprang to arms, and Lundy escaped with his life only by fleeing in disguise.

Meanwhile, the Rev. George Walker and Major Henry Baker and Captain Adam Murray, three militants to the backbone, took charge of affairs and put Derry in the best state of defence possible; but the outlook was not bright. Military opinion was agreed that the town could not hold out against such an army as James was bringing against it; it seemed likely that to defend it would be to invite another Drogheda;

and while the debate in the town council was still raging, James appeared under the walls expecting an immediate surrender.

Negotiations were begun; but the sight of the Catholic army was the last thing needed to inflame the townsmen. A group of them managed to get a cannon pointed in the king's direction and touched it off. The ball is said to have passed so close to him that the wind of it blew off his hat; at any rate, the negotiations ended then and there, and with a shout of "No surrender!" Derry prepared for the struggle.

That was the eighteenth day of April, 1689, and for fifteen weeks the town held out against a strict siege, which nothing could break. There were assaults and sallies, a bombardment which killed many people —all the accompaniments of a siege, with the final accompaniment of famine. It was the old story of horseflesh, mice and rats and even salted hides being greedily devoured; of a garrison thinning wofully from death and disease; but though there seemed to be no choice except starvation or surrender, nobody thought of surrender. And then, on Sunday, July 28th, a relief fleet which had been hovering uncertainly at the mouth of the harbour for some weeks, ran the batteries, broke the boom across the river, swept up to the city, and the siege was ended.

Such was the siege of Derry. A thousand incidents, impossible to set down here, are treasured in the minds of every inhabitant; and, lest the great event should ever be forgotten, two anniversaries connected with it are celebrated every year, on December 18th the Closing of the Gates against the King's Army, and on

August 12th the Raising of the Siege. There are processions and meetings and speeches of a very Protestant character, and at the December festival the effigy of the perfidious Lundy is hanged and burnt—not without some little rioting, for rather more than half the population of Derry is Catholic and Nationalist. One of the popular airs upon these occasions is, of course, "Boyne Water," and another is about Derry herself. It is called

THE MAIDEN CITY

Where Foyle his swelling waters rolls northward to the main,
Here, Queen of Erin's daughters, fair Derry fixed her reign;
A holy temple crowned her, and commerce graced her street,
A rampart wall was round her, the river at her feet;
And here she sat alone, boys, and, looking from the hill,
Vowed the Maiden on her throne, boys, would be a Maiden still.

From Antrim crossing over, in famous eighty-eight,
A plumed and belted lover came to the Ferry Gate:
She summoned to defend her our sires—a beardless race—
They shouted "No Surrender!" and slammed it in his face.
Then, in a quiet tone, boys, they told him 'twas their will
That the Maiden on her throne, boys, should be a Maiden still.

Next, crushing all before him, a kingly wooer came
(The royal banner o'er him blushed crimson deep for shame);
He showed the Pope's commission, nor dreamed to be refused;
She pitied his condition, but begged to stand excused.
In short, the fact is known, boys, she chased him from the hill,
For the Maiden on her throne, boys, would be a Maiden still.

On our peaceful sires descending, 'twas then the tempest broke,
Their peaceful dwellings rending, 'mid blood and flame and smoke.

That hallowed graveyard yonder swells with the slaughtered dead—
O brothers! pause and ponder—it was for us they bled;
And while their gift we own, boys—the fane that tops our hill—
Oh! the Maiden on her throne, boys, shall be a Maiden still!

Nor wily tongue shall move us, nor tyrant arm affright,
We'll look to One above us who ne'er forsook the right;
Who will, may crouch and tender the birthright of the free,
But, brothers, "No Surrender!" no compromise for me!
We want no barrier stone, boys, no gates to guard the hill,
Yet the Maiden on her throne, boys, shall be a Maiden still!

There is a good marching song, if there ever was one—a song to make the heart leap and the spirit sing, when a thousand voices roar it in unison; and it very fairly represents the spirit of Derry and of the whole of Protestant Ulster—a spirit which is admirable, though often mistaken, and sometimes made use of for base and selfish ends. The song was written by a woman, a native of Derry, of course, Charlotte Tonna, some sixty years ago; and it is a song of which Ireland, north and south, should be proud.

Let me tell here, as briefly as may be, the rest of the story of that ill-fated rebellion, of which Derry wrote one terrific chapter, for unless we know it, it will be impossible for us to understand Ulster.

The relief of the Maiden City was followed by the complete defeat of the royal army before Enniskillen, and no further attempt was made to subjugate the north of Ireland. James took up headquarters at Dublin, and every nerve was strained to recruit an army capable of withstanding the one which William was

certain to bring into Ireland. The king of France sent seven thousand veterans, with a park of artillery and large stores of arms and ammunition, every device of religious and racial hatred was employed to persuade Irishmen to enlist; so that when, on June 30, 1690, the Protestant and Catholic armies stood facing each other on either side Boyne River, a few miles above Drogheda, the Protestants had no very great numerical advantage. In discipline and general efficiency, however, their advantage was immense, and the odds against James were so great that it was folly for him to risk a battle; but he could not make up his mind what to do, and in consequence, when William threw his troops across the river, he caught the Irish unprepared, and defeated them after a brisk engagement.

James was the first to gallop from the field. He reached Dublin that night, snatched a few hours' rest, and then pressed on to Waterford, where he took ship for France. Deprived of their cowardly leader, and perhaps with some comprehension of how they had been betrayed, the Irish would have been glad to lay down their arms on terms of a general amnesty, which William, for his part, was willing to grant. But the English settlers intervened. They had been compelled to restore to the Irish a third of the estates which the Commonwealth had confiscated; there were thousands of other fertile acres which the settlers coveted; and, as a result of their influence, the amnesty, when finally published, was confined to the tenant and the landless man. In consequence, the Irish army was held together by Tyrconnell and Sarsfield, and the rebellion did not end until Athlone, Cork, Kinsale, Limerick,

and finally Galway had been captured by the English. The Irish troops were permitted to go to France and enlist in the king's army, as has been told already; and so ended the hope of placing a Catholic monarch on the English throne. So ended, too, for more than two centuries, Catholic liberty in Ireland.

It is this Protestant triumph which is so dear to Ulster, and which the walls of Derry have been preserved to commemorate. Their preservation is a great inconvenience to the inhabitants of that town, but any one who proposed to remove them would be treated as a traitor. They circle the steep hill upon which the oldest part of the town is built, and when one wishes to enter it, one must go around to one of the gates. There are seven gates, now, instead of the original four; but it takes quite a walk, sometimes, to get to one, for the walls are something over a mile around. But no patriotic resident would think of objecting to this—indeed, the walk gives him time to meditate upon his city's glory and to thank the Lord that he was born there. I suspect that the Catholics of Derry are just as proud of the walls as the Protestants are.

It so happened that there was a gate not far from our hotel, so we passed through it, and found ourselves confronted by one of the steepest streets I have ever seen. The hill on which the old citadel was built slopes very abruptly on this side toward the river, and no attempt has been made to cut it down. We managed to climb it, and came out upon the so-called Diamond—the square at the centre of the town where the old town hall once stood, but which has now, to quote Murray, "been converted into a pleasant garden

by the London Companies." For it should be remembered that the grant made to the London Companies three hundred years ago is still in force.

The Diamond is the heart of the town, and from it four arteries radiate, running to the four original gates; other smaller streets zig-zag away in various directions, and everywhere is the vigorous flow of life and trade. The shops are bright and attractive, and that evening crowds of girls, freed from the day's labour in the factories, were loitering past them, arm in arm, staring in at the windows and chattering among themselves. They were distinctly livelier than the factory girls of Athlone, and I judge that life is easier for them and that they are better paid.

We walked about for a long time, and then, for want of something better to do, went to a moving-picture show. I have forgotten all the pictures but two—a meeting of the Knights of the Garter at Windsor and a review of a body of English cavalry. In the former, King George and Queen Mary twice passed slowly before the audience; in the latter, the king, on a spirited horse, cantered down the field and then took his station in the foreground while his troops galloped past. It was a stirring scene; but the audience watched it in stony, almost breathless silence, without the shadow of applause—and this in "loyal Derry"! I am inclined to think that, with reference to England, the north of Ireland and the south of Ireland are "sisters under their skins."

We had been wondering, during the final reel, how we were going to find our way back to the hotel through the dark and unfamiliar streets, for it was nearly ten

o'clock; and we came out into them with a start of astonishment, for it was still quite light, with the street lights not yet on. So we loitered about for half an hour longer; and then, from the balcony in front of our window, sat watching for an hour more the fascinating life flowing past below us.

One feature of it was a boy quartette,—one of the boys with a clear, high soprano voice,—which sang very sweetly, "It's a long way to Tipperary"; and then, just as we began to think everybody had gone to bed, there came a blast of martial music down the street, and the tramp of feet, and a company of men swung past, going heaven knows where; but the fife-and-drum corps which marched at their head was making the windows rattle with

> "The Maiden on her throne, boys, shall
> be a Maiden still!"

It was the first of many such processions we were to see during our remaining weeks in Ireland.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE GRAINAN OF AILEACH

DERRY has a charm—the charm of the hive—for it is a busy town, and a cheerful one. It is only on mooted anniversaries, I fancy, or when some fire-brand politician comes to town, that the Protestants and Catholics amuse themselves by breaking each other's heads. At other times they must work amicably side by side. At least, I saw nobody idle; and Catholics and Protestants alike were plainly infected by the same spirit of hustle.

The cause of the difference between the north and south of Ireland has been hotly debated for a hundred years. Why is the north energetic and prosperous, while the south is lazy and poverty-stricken? Some say it is the difference in climate, others the difference in religion. I could perceive no great difference in the climate, and as for religion—strange as it may seem to those who think of Ulster only in the light of Orange manifestoes—there are almost as many Catholics as Protestants in the north of Ireland. My own opinion is that the Celt is easy-going in the south and industrious in the north because of the environment. "Canny" is undoubtedly the best of all adjectives to apply to the Scotch—they are congenitally thrifty and industrious. The Celt, on the other hand, is congenitally easy-going and unambitious. Left to himself, among his own people, weighted with centuries of repression, he falls into a lethargy from which it is impossible to awaken

him—from which, I sometimes think, he will never be awakened. But put him in another environment, and he soon catches its spirit. At least, his children catch it, and their children are confirmed in it—and there you are. Put them back in the old environment, and in another generation or two they will have slipped back into the old habits of carelessness and improvidence. This, it seems to me, is the Irishman's history not only in the north of Ireland, but here in America. He is adaptable, impressionable, and plastic.

It would be absurd for any one to go to Derry without making a circuit of the walls, and this we proceeded to do next morning. We mounted them at the New Gate, where they are at least twenty-five feet high. There is a promenade on top about fifteen feet wide, and along the outer edge the old cannon given by the London companies still frown down through the embrasures of the battlement. Outside the wall there was originally a moat, but this has disappeared, and so have many of the old bastions. A few of them still remain—the double bastion where the fruitful gallows stood, and from which the noisy old gun, affectionately christened "Roaring Meg," still points out over the town. And back of the cathedral, the old wall stands as it stood during the siege, with its high protecting parapet, crowned with little loop-holed turrets.

The cathedral itself is a quaint, squat structure, with pinnacled tower, standing in the midst of a crowded graveyard, the most prominent object in which is an obelisk erected over the bodies of those who fell in the siege. The inscription, as is fitting, is long and

eloquent. The church itself is comparatively modern and uninteresting, but it is filled with trophies of the siege—a bomb-shell containing a summons to surrender which fell in the cathedral yard, the flags taken from the French during a sally, memorials of the Rev. Mr. Walker, and so on. It is still called after St. Columba, although the abbey built by the Saint stood outside the present walls.

A little distance past the cathedral is another bastion which has been turned into a foundation for the great monument to Walker—a fluted column ninety feet high, surmounted by a statue of the hero, his Bible in one hand. Time was when he held a sword in the other, but legend has it that the sword fell with a crash on the day that O'Connell won Catholic emancipation for Ireland.

A fierce controversy has raged about the part Walker really played in the siege; and it is probable that he at least shared the honours with Murray and Baker. However that may be, he must have been an inspiring figure, as he walked about the walls, with his white hair and impassioned face and commanding vigour—a vigour which his seventy-two years seem nowise to have impaired; and his end was inspiring, too, for he did not rest quietly at home, content with his laurels, as most men would have done. Instead, he joined William's army, was in the forefront at the Battle of the Boyne, and managed to get killed there while exhorting the troops to do their duty.

The town of Derry has long since outgrown the old walls, but there is little else worth seeing there, unless

one is interested in a busy port, or in humming factories, or rumbling mills, or clattering foundries. Of these there is full store. But a few miles to the west, on the summit of a hill looking down upon Lough Swilly, is the cashel which was once the stronghold of the Kings of Ulster, and for it I set out that afternoon.

Murray, with that vagueness delightful in the Irish but exasperating in a guide-book, remarks that "it can be reached from Bridge End Station on the Buncrana line," so I proceeded to the station of the Buncrana line on the outskirts of the town, and bought a ticket to Bridge End Station. The ticket seller had apparently never heard of the Grainan of Aileach, as the cashel is called, and seemed rather to doubt if such a thing existed at all; but I determined to trust to luck, and took my seat in the little train which presently backed in along the platform.

The Buncrana line is, I judge, a small affair; at any rate, the train was very primitive, and the two men who shared the compartment with me complained bitterly of the poor service the railroads give the people of Ireland. They said it was a shame and a disgrace, and that no free people would put up with the insults and ignominy which the railroads heap upon the Irish, and much more to the same effect. I had heard this complaint before and have read it in more than one book; but I never had any real cause of complaint myself. Beyond a tendency to let the passengers look out for themselves, the guards are as courteous as guards anywhere; and only once, on the occasion of the race-meeting at Charleville, did we suffer from crowding. This was not because we travelled first,

because we didn't—we travelled second; and when I was alone, I always travelled third, as I would advise any one to do who wishes really to meet the people.

Bridge End Station is only a few minutes' run from Derry, and when I got off there, I asked the man who took my ticket if he could direct me to the cashel.

"I can," he said; "but it is a long way from here, and a stiff climb. Do you see that hill yonder?" and he pointed to a lofty peak some miles away. "It is there you will find the fort, right on the very top."

"Have you ever been there?" I asked.

"I have not, though I'm thinking I will go some day, for them that have seen it tell me it is a wonderful sight. But 'tis a long walk."

"Well, I'm going to try for it," I said, and hitched my camera under my arm. "How do I start?"

"By that road yonder; and turn to your right at the village. Good luck to you, sir."

I could see he didn't really believe I would get to the cashel; but I set off happily along the road, between high hedges; and presently I passed a village, and turned to the right, as he had told me; and then two barefooted children caught up with me, on their way home from school. They knew the way to the cashel very well, though they had never been there either; and presently they left me and struck off across the fields; and then I came to a place where the road forked, and stopped to ask a man who was wheeling manure from a big stable which way to go. He too was astonished that any one should start off so carelessly on such an expedition; but he directed me up a narrow by-way, which soon began to climb steeply;

and then the valley beneath me opened more and more, and finally I saw to my right the summit I was aiming for, and struck boldly toward it along a boggy path.

The path led me to the rear of a thatched cottage, where two men were stacking hay. They assured me that I was on the right road, and I pushed on again for the summit, past another little house, from which a man suddenly emerged and hailed me.

"Where be you going?" he demanded.

"To the fort," I said. "It's up this way, isn't it?"

"It might be."

"Am I trespassing?" I asked, for there seemed to be an unfriendly air about him.

"You are so," he answered.

"I'm sorry," I stammered; "if there's another way—"

"There is no other way."

"Well, then, I'll have to go this way," I said. "I'll not do any harm."

"That's as may be. You must pay three-pence if you wish to pass."

I paid the three-pence rather than waste time in argument, which, of course, wouldn't have done any good; and his countenance became distinctly more pleasant when the pennies were in his hand, and he directed me how to go; and I started up again, over springy heather now, along a high wall of stones gathered from the field; and then the ground grew wet and boggy, just as it is on the mountains of Connemara, and I had to make a detour—the man who directed me, probably thought nothing of a little bog! A ploughman in a neighbouring field stopped work to watch me

with interest until I passed from sight, and two red calves also came close to investigate the stranger; and then I crested the last ridge and saw towering before me the stronghold where Owen, son of Nial the Great, established himself to rule over his province, Tyrone.

For a moment I was fairly startled at the huge apparition, grey and solitary and impressive, for I had expected no such monster edifice—a cyclopean circle of stone, looking like the handiwork of some race of giants, three hundred feet around and eighteen feet high, with a wall fourteen feet in thickness!

The outer face of the wall is inclined slightly inwards, and is very smooth and regular. It is made of flat, hammer-dressed stones of various sizes, carefully fitted together, but uncemented, as with all these old forts. The stones are for the most part quite small, very different from the great blocks used in the other cashels I had seen. There is a single entrance, a doorway some five feet high by two wide, slightly inclined inward toward the top, and looking very tiny indeed in that great stretch of wall; and then my heart stood still with dismay, for there was an iron gate across the entrance, and I thought for a moment that it was locked. With a sigh of relief I found that the padlock which held it was not snapped shut, and I opened it and entered.

It was as though I had stepped into some old Roman amphitheatre, for the terraces which run around it from top to bottom have the appearance of tiers of seats. They mount one above the other to the narrow platform at the top, which is guarded by a low parapet. Two flights of steps run up the slope, but an active

man would have no need of them. On either side of the entrance door a gallery runs away in the thickness of the wall, opening some distance away on the interior, and designed, I suppose, to enable an extra force to defend the entrance.

Of the castle which once stood within that stone circle not a trace remains, and the circle itself, as it stands to-day, is largely a restoration, for Murtagh O'Brien captured it in 1101 and did his best to destroy it, and the storms of the centuries that followed beat it down stone by stone. But these fragments have all been gathered up and put back into place, so that the great fort stands to-day much as it did in the days of its glory, except that the outworks of earth and stone which formed the first lines of defence, have disappeared. The cashel was to this great fortification what the donjon tower was to the later Norman castle—the ultimate place of refuge for the garrison.

"Grainan" means a royal seat, and "Aileach," so say the Four Masters of Donegal, was a Scotch princess, "modest and blooming," who lost her heart to Owen of the Hy-Nial, and followed him back to Erin. After the division of the north of Ireland with his brother Connell, he set up his palace here—Connell's you will remember was at Donegal—and so this became the royal seat of the rulers of Tyrone. Hither came St. Patrick to baptise Owen and his family; hither came St. Columba before his exile to Iona; hither captive Danes were dragged in triumph. But at last Murtagh O'Brien, King of Munster, led a great raid to the north, and defeated the army of Tyrone and captured the mighty fortress, and made each of his sol-

diers carry away a stone of it in token of his triumph.

That ended its earthly glory, but it remains glorious in legend; for it is beneath its old grey walls that the Knights of the Gael stand deathless and untiring, each beside his steed with his hand upon the saddle-bow, waiting the trumpet-call that shall break the charm that binds them, and release them to win back their heritage in Erin. In the caves within the hill the knights stand waiting—great vaulted chambers whose entrance no man knows. Nor does any man know when their release will come, whether to-morrow or not till centuries hence, for 'tis Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan herself who must choose the day and hour.

Sore disgrace it is to see the Arbitress of thrones
Vassal to a Saxoneen of cold and sapless bones!
Bitter anguish wrings our souls; with heavy sighs and groans
We wait the Young Deliverer of Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan.

Glorious is the view from the top of those old walls. To the right is Lough Foyle, to the left Lough Swilly, with the hills of Donegal, draped in silver mist, beyond—wild, grey crags, rising one behind the other; and away to the north, beyond the wide valley, are the hills of Inishowen—Owen's Island, if you know your Irish. I have never gazed upon a more superb picture of alternating lake and hill and meadow, of flashing mountain-top and dark green valley.

But if I was to get back to Derry that night, I had need to hasten; so I clambered down, after one long last look. I had still my picture to take, and made two exposures, but they give only a faint idea of the majesty of this great fort, standing here on this wild,

THE WALLS OF DERRY

THE GRAINAN OF AILEACH

deserted hilltop; and then I started downwards, with long steps, past the cottages, with the beautiful valley before me, back to the highway, down and down among the trees, past the village and so to the station. The guard was waiting there.

"Well," he said, as I sat down mopping my face, for I had covered three miles in half an hour, "did you see the fort?"

"I did so," I answered, for I had long since fallen naturally into the Irish idiom; and I told him what it was like; but I think he was unconvinced.

"Was there a man stopped you?" he asked.

"There was—a man at the end of the lane right under the fort, who made me pay three-pence before he would let me pass."

"Ah, that would be O'Donnell," said the guard, convinced at last. "He has been given the key to keep. Did he give you the key?"

"He did not. But the iron gate was unlocked."

"That was by accident, I'm thinking," said the guard. "He is not caring whether one can enter or not, so long as he has his three-pence."

So I would advise all wayfarers to the Grainan of Aileach to make sure that the gate of it is unlocked, or to demand the key, before surrendering their three-pence to O'Donnell.

When I got into the train again, I found as a fellow-passenger one of the men who had come out from Derry with me, and after I had described the cashel to him—for he had never seen it—we got to talking about Home Rule. In spite of its militant Protestantism, Derry has a very large Catholic population, and my

companion said that opinion in the town was about equally divided for and against Home Rule.

"The result is," he went on, "that whenever we have a meeting, no matter which side it's on, there's sure to be a shindy, and the police has their hands full. Most of the fellys who do the fighting don't care a rap about Home Rule, but they just take pleasure in layin' a stick against somebody's head. It's all done in a friendly spirit, and next day they will be workin' side by side the same as ever. The only ones who are really fighting Home Rule are the big landlords and manufacturers, who imagine they'll get the worst of it in the matter of taxation at the hands of a Catholic parliament, and they do everything they can to keep their people stirred up. That has always been their policy; and the big Catholic employers in the south —what few of them there are—aren't a whit better. They're all afraid that if the Catholic workingmen and the Protestant workingmen once get together they'll fix up some kind of a union, and demand better wages. As long as they can be kept fighting each other, there's no danger of that; and the poor idiots haven't sense enough to see how they're being made fools of. But they'll see it some day, and then look out!"

"How about this army of Ulster the papers are so full of?"

My companion laughed.

"There isn't any army around here, unless you can call a few hundred devil-may-care boys an army. I did hear something about some drill going on, but as far as fighting goes that's all nonsense. The boys are ready enough to crack a head with a stick, but they're

the first to run when the police arrive, and they'll think a long time before they try to stand up against the British army. I'll not say that they're not more in earnest over Belfast way; but even there, a few politicians have stirred up most of the talk—Sir Edward Carson and the likes of him. It's all a political game, that's how I look at it."

I walked around Derry for a time that afternoon, and so far as public buildings go, Catholicism and Protestantism seem about equally represented—and with the strangest contrasts. Across the road from St. Columb's College are the Nazareth Homes; around the corner from St. Augustine's Church is the Apprentice Boys' Hall; a few steps farther on is a Presbyterian church, and the Freemasons' Hall, and then St. Columb's Temperance Hall, and then a convent; and if you walk back again to the Diamond and make some inquiries, you will find that one of the radiating streets is the home of militant Catholics, and the next the home of militant Orangemen, and you will be accommodated with a fight at any time if you go into the latter and shout "To hell with King Billy," or into the former and shout "To hell with the Pope!" And if you buy one of the two papers which the town supports, you will read denunciations of Home Rule and contemptuous references to "croppies," while, if you buy the other, you will read denunciations just as fierce of Orange plots against Ireland.

I have wondered since how much of this agitation is subsidised and how much is real. I have heard both Catholics and Protestants complain that it is kept alive in great part by professional agitators, working in very

diverse interests but to a common selfish end—and that end, as my friend of the morning pointed out, the continuance and, if possible, the deepening of the rift between the two religions. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Protestants and Catholics alike take a fierce joy in an occasional fight, as lending a real interest to life. But I am convinced that religion has really little to do with this—that it is just the peg upon which the quarrels are hung. If it wasn't that, it would probably be something else, for Irishmen have been fighting each other ever since history began. The fights at Donnybrook were as fierce as any, though there wasn't a Protestant in the crowd!

The Orange Societies, of course, with their parades and taunting songs and flaunting banners and praise of Cromwell and "King Billy," do not make for peace. Usually, on such occasions, blows are exchanged; and so the name of Orangeman has come to be associated with riots. But, as another writer has pointed out, in considering these things, "you should not forget the common pugnacity. Only an Irishman can appreciate the fierce joy of shouting 'To hell with the Pope!' Many a man who had no claim to belong to the Orange Society has known the delight of breaking Catholic heads or of going down in a lost battle, outnumbered but damaging his foes to the last. And many who are slow to attend Mass, are quick to seize their cudgels when they hear the Orange bands play the tune of Boyne Water. Like the Crusaders, the Protestant and Catholic champions alike feel that by their battles they make amends for the errors and shortcomings of peace."

So it is a mistake to take these rows too seriously.

To an Irishman they are never serious; they are rather the innocent and natural diversions of a holiday, small events which add to the savour of existence; and, indeed, they are far less numerous and far less deadly than they once were. In time, if the people are let alone and old sores are allowed quietly to heal, they will probably cease altogether.

It is a mistake, too, I think to take the Orangemen too seriously. They have such a habit of hyperbole that most Irishmen smile at their hysterics and threats of civil war as at sheer fudge. In fact, the Ulster controversy is so full of comic opera elements that it is difficult to keep from smiling at it. For instance, Sir Edward Carson's elder son is a member of the United Irish League because he believes in a united Ireland, while John Redmond's nephew and adopted son is enrolled among the Ulster Volunteers because he is opposed to coercion! Gilbert and Sullivan never invented anything more fantastic.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BRIDGE OF THE GIANTS

THERE is no busier place in Derry than the stretch of quays along the river, and one may see ships there not only from England and Belgium and France, but from Australia and Argentina and India and Brazil. The river is wide and deep, with the channel carefully marked by a line of buoys extending clear out into Lough Foyle; but there are no better facilities here for shipping than at any one of half a dozen ports along the western coast, all of which are silent and deserted. For a port is of no use unless there is something to ship out of it in exchange for the things which are shipped in, or money to pay for them—and there is neither in the west of Ireland.

And, just as there is no more dismal sight than a line of deserted quays, so there is no more interesting sight than a line of busy ones, and we loitered for a long time, next morning, along those of Derry, on our way to the Midland station, on the other side of the river. There is a big iron bridge across the river just above the quays, but that seemed a long way around, so when we came to a sign-board announcing a ferry we stopped. My first thought was that the ferry-boat was on the other side; then I perceived a small motor-propelled skiff moored beside the quay, and one of the two men in it asked me if we were looking for the ferry, and I said yes, and he said that that was it.

So we clambered down into the boat and started off; and I scarcely think that that trip paid, for we were the only passengers, and the river is wide, and gasolene is expensive, and somebody had to pay the men their wages—and the fare is only a penny.

The part of the town which lies east of the river is industrial and unattractive. There are some big distilleries there, and a lot of mills and a fish-market, and row upon row of dingy dwellings; but the biggest building of all is the workhouse—one point, at least, in which the towns of the north resemble those of the south. There is another point, too—the jail, without which no Irish town is complete. Derry has one of which it is very proud—the latest word in jails, in fact—a great, circular affair, with the cells arranged in so-called "panoptic" galleries, that is in such a fashion that the guards stationed in the centre of the jail-yard can see into all of them.

But we had crossed the river not to see the town which lay beyond it, but to take train for Portrush, and we were soon rolling northward close beside the bank of the river, with a splendid view of "The Maiden on her hill, boys," on the opposite shore, dominated by the cathedral tower and Walker's white monument. Just before the river begins to widen into the lough, the train passes the ruins of an old castle of the O'Dohertys, standing on a point which juts out into the water—a castle which saw rather more than its share of siege and sally; for this is Culmore, which was always the first point of attack when any expedition advanced against Derry.

Beyond it the water widens, and on the farther shore,

which is Inishowen, there are pretty villas, standing in luxuriant woods—the homes of some of Derry's wealthy citizens. Then the train turned inland across a stretch of country so flat and carefully cultivated that it might have been Holland; and then the hills began to crowd closer and closer to the shore, until the train was running along its very edge, under precipitous crags, past grotesque pinnacles of white chalk or black basalt, and fantastic caverns worn in the cliffs by the century-long action of the waves. For that stretch of blue water stretching away to the north, so calm and beautiful, was the Atlantic, and it thunders in upon this coast, sometimes, with a fury even the rocks cannot withstand.

We turned away from it, at last, up the wide estuary of the River Bann, and so we came to Coleraine, chiefly connected in my mind with that beautiful Kitty, who, while tripping home from the fair one morning with a pitcher of buttermilk, looked at Barney MacCleary instead of at the path, and stumbled and let the pitcher drop; but, instead of crying over the spilt milk, accepted philosophically the kiss which Barney gave her; with the result that

> "very soon after poor Kitty's disaster
> The divil a pitcher was whole in Coleraine."

Among the innumerable other laws for which Lloyd-George is responsible, there is one requiring all the shop-keepers of the United Kingdoms to close their places of business one afternoon every week in order to give their employés a short vacation; and in every town the shop-keepers get together and decide which

afternoon it shall be; and if you arrive in the town on that afternoon, you will find every shop closed tight, often to your great inconvenience. It was Thursday afternoon when we reached Coleraine, and Thursday is closing day there; and we found that not only were the shops closed, but the train schedule was so altered that we had a long wait ahead of us.

But we were richly compensated for the delay, for, as we started out to explore the town, we saw written in chalk on a wall just outside the station,

To hell with the pope!

and under it in another hand,

To hell with King Billy!

and then a third hand had added,

God save King Will! No more pope!

I had heard, of course, that the accepted retort for Catholics to make, when the Pope was insulted, was to consign William of Orange to the infernal regions; but such a retort seemed so weak and ineffective that I could hardly believe in its reality. Yet here it was, and some Orangeman had paused long enough to add what is probably the usual third article of the controversy. What the fourth article is I can't guess; perhaps it is at this point that the cudgels rise and the rocks begin to fly. And it seems to me characteristic of Ireland that the Catholic in this case, instead of erasing the offending sentence, should have let it stand and answered it in kind.

Cheered and heartened by this encounter, we walked on to look at Coleraine, but found it an uninteresting

manufacturing town, with nothing in it of historical importance, for it is one of the plantations made by the London Companies, some time after 1613. It was closed as tightly, that afternoon, as on a Sunday, and we soon wearied of looking at ugly houses and silent factories, and made our way back to the station, meditating upon that black day for the Irish when this whole county, having been duly confiscated, was made over by royal edict to the hundred London adventurers, whose heirs or assigns still own it. Yet the conquest had one advantage: the O'Dohertys and the O'Cahans knew only the arts of war; the newcomers brought with them the arts of peace. One of them was distilling, and the Irish had never drunk such whiskey as the "Coleraine" which was produced here in the succeeding years. There is no more popular story in this region than that of the priest who was preaching a temperance sermon, and, after pointing out the evils of over-indulgence, continued with great earnestness, "And, me boys, 'tis the bad stuff you be takin' that does the worst of the mischief. I niver touch a drop meself—but the best Coleraine!"

We got away from Coleraine, at last, and ran northward toward the sea again, across uneven sand-drifts, past Port Stewart, where Charles Lever was once a dispensary doctor and occupied his leisure hours, which were many, in setting down the adventures of Harry Lorrequer; and then the road ran on close beside the sea to Portrush, with its pleasant beach and rock-bound bathing-pool, which was full of people on this holiday. But Portrush is a place of summer hotels, so we did not linger there, but transferred quickly to the electric

line which runs on to the Giant's Causeway, fourteen miles away.

This line was established in 1883, and so is the oldest electric road in the world; and I judge that it is still using the cars it started out with. At least, the two which composed the train that day were exceedingly primitive; one was open and the other was closed, and you took your choice. We chose the open one, of course, on the side overlooking the sea; and presently we started through the town, a man ringing a bell with one hand and waving a flag with the other, preceding us to make certain the track was clear. The bell, I suppose, is for blind people and the flag for deaf people, and the fact that the man is armed with both proves how thorough the Irish can be when they really put their minds to it.

Although the line has been in operation for thirty years, it is still evidently regarded with fear and wonder by the people who live along it. Time was when the power was conveyed by means of the "third rail," so common in the United States. With us, however, the rail is only used along a guarded right-of-way. Here it was exposed close up by the fence at the roadside, and though it was well out of the way, it was nevertheless stumbled over by many men and beasts, with the usual result. There were many protests, and in the course of fifteen or twenty years, the Board of Trade was moved to investigate.

The evidence at the hearing was most conflicting. The people of the neighbourhood asserted that their lives were in constant danger. The company, on the other hand, claimed that no sober man would ever step

on the rail, since to get to it he had to cross the tracks. The people of the neighbourhood protested indignantly against this reflection upon their habits, and asked triumphantly if the horses and cows and other poor beasts that were killed were also drunk. The company retorted that, so far as the horses and cows were concerned, it was the practice of the natives, for miles around, whenever they had an animal about to die, to lead or, if it was unable to walk, to haul it to the railway, and prop it against the fence with a foot on the rail, and then to demand compensation for its death. There was, perhaps, a grain of truth in this; but the board, nevertheless, ordered the company to take up the rail and substitute an overhead wire for it, and this has been done.

The only way the natives can get damages now is to inveigle a car to run into them, and this is well-nigh impossible, for the cars are run very slowly and carefully, and at every curve there is a signal cabin, where a watchful guard, armed with a red flag and a white one, keeps careful eyes upon the track.

We were just gathering speed outside the town, when we saw in a near-by field an aggregation whose bills had attracted our attention, more than once, in our journeyings about Ireland. It was "Buff Bill's Circus," and the picturesqueness of its lithographs had made us most anxious to see it. Here it was, at last, and it consisted of three tiny tents and one van and three or four horses, and five or six people, who at this moment were eating their midday meal, seated on the ground about a sheet-iron stove, while the youngsters of the neighbourhood looked on. I am sorry we

did not get to see the show, for I am sure we should have enjoyed it.

Then the road mounted to a terrace high above the sea, and the views over coast and water were superb. The effects of erosion are especially fantastic, and the line passes fretted spires, and yawning caverns, and deep gullies and mighty arches, all worn in the chalk and basalt cliffs by the ceaseless action of the waves; and at one place there is a grotesque formation which does indeed, as may be seen from the picture opposite the next page, resemble a "Giant's Head."

And there is one most picturesque ruin, for, ten miles out from Portrush, all that is left of Dunluce castle overhangs the sea from the summit of a precipitous rock, separated from the mainland by a deep chasm. The chasm is twenty feet wide, and in days of old there was a drawbridge over it; but the bridge has disappeared, and now there is just an arch of masonry about two feet wide and without protection of any sort. It takes a steady head to cross it, but the Irish are fond of just such breakneck bridges. The castle itself, with its roofless gables and jagged walls, seems a part of the rock on which it is built. It is said to possess a banshee, and one can well believe it!

Dunluce is interesting because it was once a stronghold of the Scotch invaders who succeeded in conquering all this northeast coast of Ireland from here around to Carlingford Lough, away below Belfast. Scotland is only a few miles away across the North Channel—one can see its coast on a clear day from the cliffs above Benmore; and it was natural enough that there should be sailing back and forth. Owen, first lord of Tyrone,

brought a wife from Scotland—that Aileach, after whom he named his fortress; and they had many children, one of whom went back to Scotland and became the head of that princedom whose chief afterwards called himself "Lord of the Isles." In Ireland, the family was O'Donnell; but in Scotland the members of Clandonnell were not Os but Macs. Angus MacDonnell married a daughter of the great house of O'Cahan, and by this means and by that, the Scotch gradually won a foothold on the Irish coast and built castles up and down it; and finally, in a pitched battle, defeated the Irish who held the land about Dunluce and had built this castle here.

It was besieged and captured after that, once by the Irish under Shane O'Neill, and once by the English under Sir John Perrot; and during the troubled times of the Commonwealth and Restoration fell into ruins and was never restored—partly, no doubt, because it was no longer safe; for one night in 1639, there was a great party in the castle, and a storm arose, and the waves dashed against the rock below it, and suddenly part of the rock gave way and carried the kitchen and eight servants down into the abyss.

Just beyond the castle, the road rounds a point and runs down into the valley of the Bush River, where stands the little town of Bushmills, known all over the world because of the whiskey which is made there; and then it passes a great house on a cliff overlooking the sea, Runkerry Castle; and then high up on the slope ahead loom two big hotels, and the tram stops, for this is the Causeway.

Both the hotels at the Causeway are owned by the

THE "GIANT'S HEAD," NEAR PORTRUSH

THE RUINS OF DUNLUCE CASTLE

same man, but each maintains its runner, and each runner makes a lively bid for your custom; and then, when you have made your choice and started toward it, you will suddenly be conscious of a rough voice speaking over your shoulder, and you will turn to find a man striding at your heels, a man unshaven and clad in nondescript clothes; and if you listen very attentively you will presently understand that he is offering to guide you about the Causeway.

Everybody in the vicinity of the Causeway makes his living off the people who visit it, and the favourite profession is that of guide. Now a guide is wholly unnecessary, for a broad road leads directly to the Causeway, and once there it is simply a question of using one's eyes. But from the persistence of the guides, one would think there was great danger of getting lost, or of falling overboard, or of experiencing some other horrible misfortune, if one ventured there unattended. Every guide carries also in his waistcoat pocket one or more fossils, which he found himself and prizes very highly, but is willing to sell for a small sum, as a personal favour. When his supply is exhausted, he goes and buys some more from the syndicate which ships them in in quantity.

For it should be remembered that the Causeway is as strictly organised for profit and as carefully exploited as is Killarney.

As soon as we had arranged for our room, we set off for the Causeway, running the gauntlet of guides posted on both sides of the road. Then a man with a pony-cart wanted to drive us to our destination, and one would have thought, from the way he spoke,

that it was a long and trying journey; then we refused three or four offers of fossils and postcards; and finally we found ourselves alone on a road which swept round the edge of a great amphitheatre of cliff; and the face of that cliff is worth examining, for it is formed of the lava flow from some long-extinct crater, and the successive flows, separated by the so-called ochre beds, or strata of dark-red volcanic ash, can be plainly distinguished. The road gradually drops, until it is quite near the sea; and then it passes a number of shanties, from which old women issue to waylay the passer-by with offers of fossils and post-cards and various curios; and then the visitor is confronted by a high wire fence, beyond which, if he looks closely, he will see a little neck of land running out into the water—and that is the celebrated Giant's Causeway.

It is so small and so seemingly insignificant that Betty and I stared at it through the fence with a distinct shock of disappointment; then we went on to the gate, paid the sixpence which is extorted from every visitor, registered ourselves on the turnstile, and entered.

The misfortune of the Causeway is that its fame is too great. The visitor, expecting to see something magnificent and grandiose, is rather dashed at first to find how small it is; but after a few minutes' wandering over the queer columns of basalt, this feeling passes, and one begins to realise that it is really one of the wonders of the world. I am not going to describe it —every one has seen photographs of it, or if any one hasn't, he will find some opposite this page; and the photographs picture it much better than I can.

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

THE CLIFFS BEYOND THE CAUSEWAY

There are some forty thousand of the pillars, the guide-book says; five-sided or six-sided for the most part, averaging, I should say, about fifteen inches in diameter, and so close together that a lead pencil is too thick to be thrust between them. The pillars are divided into regular, worm-like segments, some six or eight inches thick, and there are quite a lot of segments lying about, broken off from the columns. The whole bed is said by geologists to be nothing but a lava-flow, which broke up into these columnar shapes when it cooled and contracted.

The native Irish have a far better explanation than that. In the old days, the mighty Finn MacCool, annoyed at the boasting of a Caledonian rival on the hills across the channel, invited him to step over and see which was the better man. And the giant said he would be glad to come over and show Finn a thing or two, if it wasn't for wetting his feet. So Finn, in a rage, built a causeway right over to Scotland, and the Scotch giant came across on it; and of course Finn beat him well (for this is an Irish legend); but with that generosity which has always been characteristic of Irishmen after they have whipped their opponents, he permitted his humbled rival to choose a wife from the many fair girls of the neighbourhood, and to build him a house and settle down; which the Scotch giant was very glad to do; for every one knows that the Scotch women are rough and hard-bitten, also that Scotland is a land of mist and snow, not fair like Ireland, which has always been the loveliest country in the world. And presently, since the causeway wasn't needed any more and impeded navigation, Finn gave

it a kick with the foot of him and sunk it in the sea, all but this little end against the Irish coast. And there it stands unto this day to witness if I lie.

Whatever you think of the Causeway, you will certainly be impressed when you pass out between the clustered columns of the Giant's Gateway, and start on the walk under the beetling cliffs beyond. The narrow path mounts up and up, under overhanging masses of columnar stone, which all too evidently crashes down from time to time, for there are great piles of debris below, and the path is either swept away in places or recently repaired; so most visitors hurry past with one eye upward, and the other contemplating the beauty of the scene below.

At least we did; and then we came out at Chimney Point, crowned with its chimney-like columns—a mass of basalt on top of a red ochre bed. And here there was a seat where we sat down to contemplate one of the most impressive views in Ireland—a combination of blue sea and white surf and black crag and columned cliff not soon to be forgotten.

We went on, at last, around the point of the cliff, where the path overhangs the depths below and is guarded by an iron railing; on and on, past clusters of columns named looms or organ pipes, or whatever Irish fancy may have suggested; and at last we turned slowly back, and spent another half hour at the Causeway, hunting out the wishing-chair, and the giant's cannon, and Lord Antrim's parlour—all of which may easily be found; and then we took a drink from the giant's well, a spring of pure, cold water, bubbling up from among the rocks; and so back to the hotel and to dinner.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GLENS OF ANTRIM

THERE are some caves at the Causeway which are said to be well worth visiting, but we found, next morning, that a stiff wind during the night had kicked up such a sea that it was impossible to get to them. So we spent the morning walking down to a beautiful beach some distance below the hotel, and building a drift-wood fire there, and watching the waves roll in. Then, while Betty went in to read some just-arrived letters from home, I went on along the top of the cliffs above the Causeway.

There is a path which follows the edge of the cliff closely, and a more magnificent view I have never seen. At Chimney Point the rollers were breaking in especial violence over the black rocks, on which one of the galleons of the Armada went to pieces. Her name was the *Gerona*, and some of her guns were rescued from the surf and added to the armament of Dunluce castle. Legend has it that she brought her disaster upon herself by running in too near the coast to fire at the chimney rocks, which she mistook for the towers of Dunluce. The bay where the bodies of her crew were washed ashore has been called Port-na-Spania ever since.

A little farther on is the uttermost point of all, Pleaskin, where the view reaches its greatest grandeur, for one is here four hundred feet above the sea, and on

that bright, clear, wind-swept morning, I could see the purple peaks of the Donegal coast stretching far to the west, while to the northeast loomed the misty outline of the Scottish hills, scarcely discernible against the sky. And all between stretched the white-capped waters of the North Channel, with a tossing boat here and there, and at my feet were the last black basalt outposts of Erin, with the rollers curling over them in regular, heavy rhythm. If Ireland has anything to show more fair I did not see it.

I went slowly back, at last, along the path, over the springy heather; and an hour later we had said good-bye to the Causeway, and were rattling away along a pleasant road toward Ballycastle. We were the only voyagers, that day, so instead of the heavy bus, a side-car had been placed at our disposal. It was the first car we had mounted since our ride around Lough Gill; and how good it felt to settle back again into the corner of the seat, and swing along mile after mile!

Our jarvey was an old fellow who was loquacious enough, at first, and who stopped to show us, in a ravine not far from the Causeway, a crevice in the rock which he said was used as a pulpit by the first Presbyterian preacher in Ulster—for it should be remembered that for many years the Presbyterians and other nonconformists were treated as harshly by the established church as the Catholics were. And then we came to a little village where the children were gathering for school, and our jarvey stopped to water the horse, which gave us the opportunity to have a word with the children.

And fairly surprised we were when they began to talk, for they spoke a Scotch as broad as any to be heard in the Highlands. Their names were Scotch, too—Fergus and Angus; and the only thing we encountered on that drive which astonished us more were the sign-posts at the cross-roads, the directions on which are all in Gaelic. We had seen Gaelic sign-posts before, in the west, but they always had the direction in English, too. Here there was no English. It is a riddle that I have never unravelled, for I heard no Gaelic spoken here. Of course it is spoken; but so many wayfarers along this road speak only English that I cannot understand the contempt for them which the sign-boards indicate.

I have referred already to the Irishman's love for breakneck bridges, and the prize one of all is at the village of Ballintoy, into which the road drops down the steepest of hills. A little distance away along the cliffs is an isolated rock some sixty feet from the shore, and spanning the abyss between cliff and rock is the craziest bridge ever devised by man. Two rings, about eighteen inches apart, have been embedded in the rock on either side, and between these rings two ropes have been stretched. These are lashed together at intervals by transverse cords, and to these cords short lengths of narrow plank have been tied side by side. For a handrail, a slender rope has been stretched between two rings some three feet higher than the others —and there you are. It is hardly correct to say that any of the ropes have been "stretched," for they hang in a long curve, and in the wind that was blowing that morning the bridge swung to and fro in the dizziest

fashion. There was a crowd of small boys at its land end, who offered to negotiate the passage for a penny each, but we refused to pay for the privilege of seeing them risk their lives.

And yet, probably, it would not have been risking them, for they were used to the bridge and thought nothing of crossing it. Nay, more, the men of the neighbourhood cross it carrying heavy burdens, for they are fishermen and keep all their ropes and nets and even their boats out on the rock, round which, at certain stages of the tide, the salmon circle, so that they can be caught by nets shot out from the rock. There is no harbour for the boats, so they have to be hoisted up to a terrace in the rock some twenty feet above the water by means of a windlass; and then, having made everything snug, the fishermen cross back over the bridge with the catch on their shoulders. It need scarcely be added that I, who had balked at the far more substantial bridges at Dromahair and Dunluce, never for an instant thought of crossing this one.

We climbed out to the top of the cliffs again, and jogged along with the beautiful sea to our left, and the beautiful rolling country to our right, its meadows brilliant with the lush green of the young flax; and then we turned back inland between high hedgerows; and the bright sun and the soft air proved too much for our jarvey, who dropped gently to sleep—a fact we didn't notice until the horse, after a backward glance, stopped to take a few bites from the hedge. The driver woke with a start and jerked the horse angrily back into the middle of the road, and then glanced guiltily at us, but we were gazing far away into

the distance; and then he dropped off again, and again the horse, feeling the slackened reins, stopped for a bite; and then, for fear that a motor-cycle or something might run into us, I filled my pipe and offered my pouch to the driver, and he filled up thankfully, and that kept him awake until we dropped down into the beautiful old town of Ballycastle, nestling under the high hills of Antrim. "Bally," which figures in so many Irish place-names, is from the Gaelic "baile," meaning town or village, and so Ballycastle is merely the Irish form of what in English would be prosaic Castletown.

We had tea at a clean and pleasant inn, and then spent an hour wandering about the place—to the site of the old abbey, near a sweet little river, and then down to the shore, which has been desecrated with golf-links; but the green slopes of Rathlin Island, just off the coast, are very lovely, and just outside the bay the cliffs culminate in a mighty bluff called Fairhead; and then back to the town along an avenue of beautiful trees, for a visit to the "Home Industry Depot," a room crowded with fantastic toys and some good wood-carving, all done in the neighbourhood—about the only industry of any kind, so the keeper of the shop said, now carried on in Ballycastle.

Time was when Ballycastle fancied it was destined for greatness, for a seam of coal was discovered in the hill above the town, and an enterprising Scotchman named Hugh Boyd leased the right to work it from the Earl of Antrim, and built foundries and tanneries and breweries to consume it; but unfortunately the seam turned down instead of up, Boyd died, and nobody

was found with sufficient energy to contend against so many difficulties; so the whole enterprise dropped dead. I don't know how the inhabitants came to turn to toy-making and wood-carving; perhaps some expatriated Swiss settled here,—that shop certainly did remind us of Lucerne!

There are far older memories which cluster around Ballycastle; for the stream which ripples past the abbey was in the old days called the Margy, and it was here, according to the most ancient of Irish legends, that the children of Lir, King of the Isle of Man, sought shelter after they had been turned into four white swans by their step-mother. I should like to tell that story, but there is no space here—besides, it has already been most nobly told by Mr. Rolleston. It will be found, with many others, in his "High Deeds of Finn," a book I most heartily recommend.

We were not yet at the end of our day's journey, for we had still to go on to Cushendall, sixteen miles away, and so we went back to the hotel, to find a long inside-car waiting. There were two other passengers, women of the neighbourhood, who had come in to town to do some shopping; and their gossip was most entertaining; but we dropped them before long, and then the road mounted up and up along the valley of a little river, which we could see gleaming far below us; and at last we came out upon a bog as wild and desolate as any in Connemara. There were again the familiar black cuttings, the piles of turf, and here and there a group of men and women labouring at the wet, back-breaking work. This bog, so our driver said, supplied the fuel

for the whole district, and nobody hereabouts ever thought of burning coal.

The road was quite deserted, save for a cart now and then, loaded high with turf, lumbering heavily down toward the town; and presently even these ceased, and there was no single sign of life as far as the eye could reach—only the silent bog, desolate, vast, impressive, rolling away into the distance with a beauty all its own—a beauty difficult to express, but very poignant.

How high we were upon that moor we did not realise until we came to the verge of one of the beautiful Glens of Antrim and saw, nestling away below us, the spires and roofs of Cushendall. They were perhaps half a mile away, but we travelled at least three miles to get down to them, winding back and forth along the side of the glen, crossing a great viaduct eighty feet high, past picturesque thatched houses, past the fairy thorn which no man in the village would touch for love or money, past a fragment of ruin which was once the castle where the MacDonnells stood off the English; and then we turned away to the right and began to climb again; and presently we had climbed out of Glendun into Glenaan, and I should hate to have to decide which is the more lovely.

We emerged, at last, into more open country, with high hills at our right pierced by shadowy valleys; and then the houses became more frequent, and we could see the people gathering down from the fields for the night. Twilight was at hand; but, though it must have been nearly nine o'clock, we were amused to see that

the ducks and chickens were still pecking cheerfully about the door-steps, apparently with no thought of retiring. Poultry, in Ireland, leads a strenuous life, for in summer the sun rises at three and does not set till nine. Perhaps it is these long hours which give Irish chickens an indolent air, and which explain the frequent naps one sees them taking on the family door-step.

The houses grew more and more frequent, until we were rattling down a wide street of them, under an avenue of lofty trees, and knew we were at Cushendall.

Some three miles west of the town, on the top of a bare and windy hill looking down over the Glenaan valley, is a circle of stones placed there, so legend asserts, to mark the grave of Ossian, son of Finn MacCool, and sweet singer of the Fianna of Erin; and it was to find this spot I set out next morning, through fine, windy weather. I knew where the valley of the Glenaan was, for we had passed its mouth the evening before, but as to the position of the grave itself I knew nothing. The guide-book devoted only a vague line to it; but I have a firm belief in my luck, and I knew I should find it somehow.

For a mile or more my road lay back over the way we had come, mounting steadily toward the entrance to the Glenaan Valley; and I met many little carts coming in to market, for it was Saturday; and every one who wasn't going into town was taking advantage of the fine day by working in the fields, or putting new coats of dazzling whitewash upon their houses, or digging in the little flower-gardens in front of them. And

everybody was in cheerful humour and passed the time of day with the heartiest good will.

And then I came to the entrance of the valley, and turned westward along the road which traverses it. The mountains soon began to close in on either hand, and the houses strung along the road or perched on narrow plateaus grew smaller and smaller; slate gave way to thatch, stone floors gave way to dirt ones, and the windows shrank to a single immovable sash of four small panes. In a word, as the land grew poorer, the people grew poorer, too; and the conditions of life seemed not so very different from those in far Connaught. Indeed it may very well be that this is one of those "congested districts" which are scattered over the east of Ireland.

I stopped, at last, and asked an old man in a blue flannel smock if he could tell me the way to Ossian's grave; and he told me to fare straight on till I came to some stepping-stones, and to cross the stones and push right up the hill. So I went on happily, for the air was very sweet, and the sun just warm enough, and the great wind was driving white clouds before it across the sky, and the sunshine in the faces of the people I met added to the beauty of the day; and at last I came to a cluster of thatched cottages where the little river turned in close to the road and rippled between a row of stepping-stones; and I asked a pleasant-faced woman if that was the way to Ossian's grave, and she said it was; to cross the stones and go right up the hill, and I would find a house there where I could get further directions.

The road beyond the stones ran up the hill and into

the yard of a farm-house; and in the yard there was a dog with a very savage bark; but there was also a blue-eyed girl who quieted him, while she stared at me curiously. I asked her the way to the grave, and she pointed up the hill, with a little motion of her hand toward the right, and I set off again. The road had dwindled to the merest mountain path, with a wall on either side of earth and stones, crested with prickly gorse; but I came to a break in it, at last, opening to the right, and scrambled through; and then, a minute later, in the midst of a heather-carpeted field on the very summit of the hill, I saw the grave.

It is formed of standing stones, covered with lichen and crumbling under the storms of centuries, and the vestibule, so to speak, is a semi-circle some twenty feet in diameter opening toward the east. Back of this are two chambers, one behind the other, divided by two large uprights, and I suppose it was in one of these that the body of the bard was laid—if it was laid here at all. My own guess would be that these weather-beaten stones, like those others on the hill beside Lough Gill, antedate Ossian by at least two thousand years. But that is an unimportant detail; and it may be, indeed, that when the great singer died, his comrades could think of no more fitting place to lay him than within the guardian circle of this monument of an older race, looking down across the valley and out toward the sea.

Fact and fancy have been so mingled in the Ossianic legend that it is impossible to disentangle them, nor is it profitable to try. It is fairly certain that he was born somewhere about the middle of the third century after Christ, and legend has it that he spent two hun-

dred years in the Land of Youth with Niam of the Golden-hair. When, homesick for Erin, he returned to it, it was to find his father's courts overgrown with grass and St. Patrick preaching there, and his disputes with Patrick are recorded at great length in the tales of the Fenian cycle; for Ossian bewailed the vanished days of those mighty fighters, and wished for nothing better than to join them, in whatever world they might be, while Patrick laboured to convert him from such heathen fancies and to save his soul. It is to this story reference is made in the stanza from Lionel Johnson's "Ode to Ireland," which I quoted on page 221.

Up there on the bleak hill-top the wind was roaring; but I found a nook between two of the great stones where it could not reach me, and I lighted my pipe and sat there and looked down over the valley and thought of the old days, and so spent a sweet half hour. The valley had changed but little, I fancied, with the rolling centuries; there were tiny, high-walled fields and low thatched houses on the lower slopes; but above them sprang the primal hills, clothed with heather, their bones of granite gleaming here and there, back and back over the Glens of Antrim, through which the red tide of tribal warfare had poured so many times. And over eastward lay Cushendall, nestling among its trees, with the gaunt, truncated mass of Lurigethan hill overshadowing it, and beyond that, faint and far and scarcely distinguishable from the blue sky, lay the blue sea.

That valley and those hills belong to the Earl of Antrim—his estate includes some thirty-five thousand acres of Irish soil, around which he may build walls

and post notices and set guards; and as I sat there gazing out at them, I realised far more keenly than I had ever done the absurdity of the idea that any portion of this earth's surface can rightfully belong to any man. Trace any title back, for a hundred years, or a thousand years, or two thousand years, and one finds that it started in a theft—theft on the part of an individual from the tribe which held the land in common; and the solemn farce of sale and transfer and inheritance after that was merely the passing on of stolen goods. Perhaps some day we may win through to the ideal of an earth belonging equally to all men, with private right only in the things man's industry creates.

I knocked out my pipe, at last, reluctantly enough, and took the picture of the stones which is opposite this page, but which gives a poor idea of them; and then I started downward, through the break in the hedge, through the farmyard, going warily for fear of the dog, and so to the stepping-stones; and when I looked at them, I saw what a perfect picture they made, with the stream rippling through, and the thatched cottages beyond, with the smoke whipped from their chimneys, and a single tree bending before the wind. That picture in miniature is opposite this page; but I could not snare with my camera the tang of the turf, the softness of the air, the glory of the sun, nor the murmur of the water. Those you will have to evoke for yourself, as best you can.

In the road beyond I found a mail-carrier, who had completed his morning-round among the hillside dwellings, and who was turning back to Cushendall; and we went on together. He was a tall, lithe lad, as he

THE GRAVE OF OSSIAN

AN ANTRIM LANDSCAPE

had need to be to get over his daily route among these hills; and, like every one else, he hoped some day to win his way to America. He knew many of its towns from the postmarks on the letters he carried. In the last month, he said, there had been fully a hundred from America, and welcome letters they were, for nearly all of them contained a bit of money. Many of the dwellers in these hills—like thousands more all over Ireland—would find life outside the work-house impossible but for the help from their sons and daughters in America; and it gives one a good feeling at the heart to think of those devoted boys and girls putting by every month a portion of the money which was hard to win and harder still to save, to send to the old people who were left at home.

By the side of the road, as we walked along, I saw a hovel more primitive and comfortless than most—just a tiny hut of a single room, dark and cold and bare; but against one end of it grew a great fuchsia bush, clothing it with glory. A wrinkled old woman, clad in filthy clothes, was standing in the doorway, and my companion passed the time of day with her, while I unslung my camera, for I wanted a picture of the tiny house and the great bush. I would have liked a picture of the old woman, too; but she said she was too dirty, and went in until the picture was taken which is opposite the next page. Then she came out and asked if I would send her one. It was the first time, she said, that any one had thought her houseen worth a picture; so I promised she should have one, and she gave me her name, and the postman promised it should reach her.

We went on together, after that, and I asked him

what the people of the neighbourhood thought about Home Rule.

"The truth is, sir," he answered, "that we don't know what to think, what with this man telling us one thing and that man another; but most of the poor people about here would be glad to see it, for they can't be worse off than they are, and a change might better them. Drilling and arming? Ah, there's none of that around here; there's no army of Ulster in these parts. That's just talk."

He left me at the crossroads, for he had still a letter or two to deliver farther down the road, and I went on by myself toward the town. There were more white-washers out, and they were splashing the lime about in the most reckless fashion, besprinkling the hedges and the shrubbery and even the road, somewhat to the danger of the passers-by; and at the first houses of the town I met Betty. She had been talking to the caretaker of the churchyard about the true shamrock; and he said that it did not grow wild thereabouts, but that he had some in a pot at home and would be glad to bring her a spray; and he told her of a ruined church and an old Celtic cross out along the road above the cliffs, very near, he said—not over eight minutes' walk at the most.

So we determined to take a look at it; but first we walked about the town a little, and found it quite an ordinary town, except for a great square tower at the intersection of the principal streets—a tower erected, so the tablet on it says, "as a place of confinement for rioters and idlers." I suppose the town has a modern jail now—perhaps even with panoptic galleries! At

A HUMBLE HOME IN ANTRIM

THE OLD JAIL AT CUSHENDALL

any rate, the tower is no longer used. I took a picture of it, and if you will look at the picture closely, you will see a girl drawing water from the town pump just below the tower.

We started off finally for the ruins, first to the cliffs along the sea, and then on along the path which runs at their very edge. The view was very lovely, and we didn't notice how the time was flying; but I looked at my watch presently and found that we had been walking twenty minutes, with no ruins in sight. We pushed on ten minutes longer, and had about given them up, when some children directed us which way to go, and we finally found the few remaining fragments of Layd Church, so overgrown with ivy and embowered in trees that they were scarcely recognisable as ruins at all. The cross proved to be a very modern one; and the graveyard is sadly neglected, with the grass knee-deep among the tombs, which have fallen into sorry disarray. Most of them cover some long-dead MacDonnell—they were all MacDonnells, in the old days, who lived in the Glens of Antrim.

The "eight minute walk" had taken more than half an hour, and we had need to hasten if we were to get back to the hotel in time for lunch, for the car which was to take us to Larne was to start at two; but we made it, and when the car drove up, we found it was a long outside-car with room for five people on each side. We chose the forward end of the side next the sea; and then the car proceeded to another hotel in the town, where five or six more people were waiting; and the two women who were condemned to the landward side complained bitterly. They were making the trip,

they said, just to see the sea, and here they would be compelled to sit the whole way facing the blank cliff.

"Sure, there's nothing I can do, miss," said the jarvey, who had listened sympathetically; "I can't make the car any longer, now can I? Maybe you might be glancin' over your shoulder from time to time; anyway I'm thinkin' you'll be seein' enough of the sea before you're home again."

And with that they had to be consoled.

The road runs inland for about a mile beyond Cushendall, and then turns down close to the shore of Red Bay, a vast amphitheatre of red sandstone cliffs, in whose face the road is cut. At the deepest point of the circle, where the Vale of Glenariff opens up into the mountains, is clustered a little village of white houses; and then the road runs on round the base of towering precipices; and suddenly the red sandstone changes to chalk, and the water washing against the shore, which has been a lovely green, turns milky white, with outstanding pinnacles of chalk, worn to fantastic shapes, keeping guard above it.

We had noticed an increasing crowd upon the road, all walking or riding southwards; and presently two barefooted boys jumped up on the footboard and asked if they might ride a little way; and they told us that there was a circus at Carnlough to which every one was going; and they each had the tuppence necessary for admission gripped in a grimy fist, and were very excited indeed. Carnlough, as we soon found, is a small town consisting principally of a curving beach, where a few people were bathing; and the white tent of Duffy's Circus—a much larger affair than Buff Bill's—was

pitched close beside the road. The urchins dropped off and made for the entrance; and as we passed, we caught a strain of "The Stars and Stripes Forever," painfully rendered by the circus band.

We rolled on around another wide bay, and came to Glenarm, where we paused to change horses; and then on again, under the white cliffs, past quarries where flint and chalk are mined for the Belfast market; and always at our feet lay the Irish Sea, stretching away to the dim horizon, its colour changing with every passing cloud. In and out the road circled, following the long curves of the coast; past the ruins of a castle which O'Halloran, a famous outlaw, built for himself on the top of a small rock with the sea washing round it; past another amphitheatre where the rocks change back from chalk to basalt; through a short tunnel and so to Larne.

The most interesting thing about Larne is its handsome new harbour built for the express steamers which cross several times daily to Stranrear, the shortest of the routes to Scotland. Edward Bruce chose this route when he came over with an army of six thousand men to help the Irish drive the English from Ireland, as his brother Robert had driven them from Scotland the year before at Bannockburn. It was in May, 1315, that the Scotch drew up in battle array along this strand; and a year later Bruce was crowned King of Ireland; but though at first he drove the Normans before him, his own army was gradually worn down by privation and disease, and he himself was killed at the battle of Faughart. So ended one more Irish dream!

We changed at Larne from road to rail, and were soon rolling southward, still close beside the water, past a string of seaside resorts, each of which added its quota of passengers—perspiring men and women and tired but happy children; and so we came to the old town of Carrickfergus, with its magnificent castle overlooking Belfast Lough. Its great square keep, ninety feet high, looked most imposing in the gathering twilight—how many assaults had it withstood in the seven centuries of its existence! Bruce captured it, but the MacDonnells failed. Schomberg, William's general, had better luck, and it was on the quay below it that the great Orangeman first set foot in Ireland. It has some American associations, too; for John Paul Jones sailed his good ship *Ranger* under its walls in 1778, and captured the British ship-of-war *Drake*. Murray, good British guide-book that it is, refers to the founder of the American navy as "the pirate Paul Jones." But we can afford to smile at that!

Carrickfergus is doubtless worth a visit, though the castle is used as an ordnance depot now, and visitors are admitted only to the outer court. But even that would be worth seeing; and the town possesses an old church, and some fragments of its old walls, and doubtless many interesting old houses. I am sorry we did not spend a day there.

But our train rolled on, close beside the border of Belfast Lough, and presently, far ahead, we saw the gleaming spires and clustered roofs of the citadel of Ulster.

CHAPTER XXIX

BELFAST

It had been on a Saturday evening that we first saw Dublin, and it was on a Saturday evening that we reached Belfast; and we had thought the streets of Dublin crowded, but compared with those of Belfast, they were nowhere. Even in our first ride up from the station, along York Street and Royal Avenue, it was evident that here was a town where life was strenuous and eager; there was no mistaking its air of alert prosperity; and when, after dinner, we sallied forth on foot to see more of it, we found the sidewalks so crowded that it was possible to move along them only as the crowd moved.

It was a better-dressed crowd than the Dublin one, but I fancied its cheeks were paler and its bodies less robust. Indeed, I am inclined to think the average stature in Belfast an inch or so under the average elsewhere. Great numbers of the men and women we saw on the streets that night were obviously undersized. I am by no means tall; five feet eight inches is, here in America, about the average; but when I walked among that Belfast crowd, I overtopped it by half a head. It was this strange sensation—the sensation of being a tall man, which I had never before experienced—which first drew my attention to the stature of the crowd.

There must be several regiments of British troops

stationed at Belfast, for soldiers were much in evidence that evening, and in a great diversity of uniform. They, too, for the most part, seemed undersized, in spite of their erect carriage; and they were, as is the way with soldiers everywhere, much interested in the girls; and the girls, after the fashion of girls everywhere, were much interested in the soldiers—and there was a great deal of flirting and coquetting and glancing over shoulders and stopping to talk, and walking about with clasped hands.

Next to the crowd, the most interesting feature of Belfast is the shops, which are very bright and attractive. The Scotch have a genius for fancy breads and cakes, and the bakers' shops here were extremely alluring. There seemed to be also an epidemic of auction sales and closing out sales and cut price sales, announced by great placards pasted all over the windows; but there were so many of them that I fancy most of them were fakes.

One notices also in Belfast the multiplicity of bands. It seemed to me that night that a band, playing doggedly away, was passing all the time. Sometimes the band would be followed by a body of marching men, sometimes by men and women together, sometimes it would be just playing itself along without any one behind it. Nobody in the crowd paid much attention, not even when a big company of boy scouts marched past, looking very clever in their broad hats with the little chin-straps, and grey flannel shirts and flapping short trousers showing their bare knees.

What I am setting down here are merely my first impressions of Belfast. I do not allege that they were

correct impressions, or that they fairly describe the town, but, as we were fresh from many weeks in the south and west of Ireland, the sense of contrast we experienced that first evening is not without significance.

We went back to the hotel, finally, for we had had a strenuous day; but for long and long we could hear the bands passing in the street below; and then the martial rattle of drums and scream of fifes brought us to the window, and we saw a great crowd of children march past, with banners waving and tin buckets and shovels rattling. It was a Sunday School picnic, just back from a day at the seashore; and the air which the fifes and drums were playing with a vigour that made the windows rattle was "Work, for the Night is Coming!" I had never before realised what a splendid marching tune it is!

I am sorry we did not go to church, next morning, for the pulpits of Belfast were thundering against Home Rule, as we saw by the Monday papers. Instead, we walked down to the river, for a look at the harbour and custom house, and then about the streets to the city hall, with its dome and corner towers oddly reminiscent of St. Paul's Cathedral; and then we took a tram to the Botanical Gardens. The tram ran along a tree-embowered street, lined on either side with villas set in the midst of grounds so beautiful that any of them might have been the gardens; but when we reached the end of the line, we found we had come too far. The conductor was greatly chagrined that he had forgot to tell us where to get off, and sternly refused to accept any fare for the return trip.

The gardens, which we finally reached, are very attractively laid out, but far more interesting than the flowers and the shrubs was the crowd which was coming home from church. There seems to be a church on every square in Belfast, and I judge they were all full that day—as they no doubt are every Sunday, for church-going is still fashionable in the British Isles; and the crowd which poured along the walks of the gardens was as well-dressed and handsome as could be seen anywhere. It was a crowd made up of people evidently and consciously well-to-do, and one distinctive characteristic was a certain severity of aspect, a certain prevalence of that black-coated, side-whiskered, stern-lipped type which was much more common in America thirty years ago than it is now. Our type has changed—has softened and grown more urbane; but I should judge that the cold steel of Calvinism is as sharp and merciless as ever in Belfast.

The men walked slowly along in twos and threes, talking over the sermons they had just listened to; and the sermons, judging from the newspapers, were all cast in the same mould; and that mould gives so clearly the Orange attitude toward Home Rule, that I shall try to outline it here, quoting literally from the newspaper accounts.

Home Rule, then, according to the Belfast preachers, is a Papal-inspired movement, whose object is "to thrust out of their birthright over one million enterprising, industrious, and peaceable citizens, whose only crime was their loyalty to Crown and Constitution, and to put them under that Papal yoke from which their sires had purchased their liberty. Their beloved island

home had never been more prosperous. They were grateful and they were satisfied, but their Roman Catholic fellow countrymen seemed to have no sense of satisfaction or gratitude. The Irish Nationalists had entered into a movement to sacrifice Protestantism upon the altar of Home Rule, but Orangemen and Protestants had entered into a covenant the object of which was the maintenance of their rightful heritage of British citizenship, of their commercial and industrial progress, and of their freedom. In the same spirit of patriotic Protestantism as was displayed at the siege of Derry, they would go forth to combat the onslaughts of Rome, and they would show that the same spirit lived in them as in their illustrious sires." Some of the services concluded with singing a new version of the National Anthem:

Ulster will never yield;
God is our strength and shield,
  On Him we lean.
Free, loyal, true and brave,
Our liberties we'll save.
Home Rule we'll never have.
  God save the King.

That last line is so perfunctory that it provokes a smile.

I am anxious to state the case against Home Rule as fairly as I can, the more so because, as the readers of this book must have suspected before this, I have little sympathy with the die-hard Unionists. I do not believe that they represent Ulster in any such absolute sense as they claim to do, for in the first place they hold only sixteen out of the thirty-three Ulster seats

in Parliament, and in the second place, even in the four counties which are largely Protestant, there is a very strong Nationalist sentiment. My own conviction is that the Orange Societies are being be-fooled by a clique of politicians and aristocrats whose quarrel is not with Home Rule but with the Liberal party. Nobody denies that the funds for the organisation and equipment of the Orange army have been supplied by the Conservative party, whose campaign chest has been sadly depleted by the immense sums needed to keep the agitation going. Certain leaders of that party have done their utmost to foment religious and racial hatred, not because of any religious convictions of their own, nor because of any special sympathy for Ulster, but in the hope of overthrowing the government and stopping the march of social reform. They might just as well try to stop the march of time—and some day, perhaps, they will realise it!

And yet—

These fighting preachers, these uncompromising, wrong-headed, upright old Calvinists, are undoubtedly in earnest. The congregations which sat in grim-faced silence that day listening to this oratory, were in earnest, too. But I cannot believe that, in their inmost heart of hearts, they really dread the subversion of Protestantism. What they dread is, in the first place, some diminution of their supremacy in Irish politics, and, in the second place, some diminution of their control of Irish industry. In other words, the attack they really fear is against their pocket-books, not against their creed. And it is not impossible that their pocket-books may suffer; indeed, I think it probable

that when the Home Rule Parliament has made its final adjustments of revenue, Ulster will be found to be bearing somewhat more of the burden than she now does, though perhaps not more than her just share. But this doesn't make the situation any the less serious, for ever since the world began it has been proved over and over again that the very surest way to drive men to frenzied resistance is to attack their pocket-books. As for the religious bogy, I personally believe most sincerely that it *is* a bogy. Such danger to Protestantism as exists comes, not from the Irish Catholics, but from the politicians who are using it as a football.

There was a sentence in one of the sermons preached that day to the effect that Irish Protestants laboured to help Irish Catholics to civil and religious liberty, when Irish Catholics were unable to help themselves, and this is a fact which I am sure Irish Catholics will be the last to forget. A century ago, Ulster was as fiercely Nationalist as she is fiercely Unionist to-day; it was in Belfast that the Society of United Irishmen was organised, and its leader was Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant, and its first members were Presbyterians, and one of its objects was Catholic Emancipation. And, as a close to these disconnected remarks, I cannot do better than repeat an anecdote I saw the other day in the *Nineteenth Century*. Some sympathetic neighbours called upon the mother of Sir David Baird to condole with her over her son's misfortunes, and they told her, with bated voices, how he had been captured by Tippoo Sultan, and chained to a soldier and thrust into a dungeon. Baird's mother listened silently, and then a little smile flitted across her lips.

"God help the laddie that's chained to my Davie!" she said softly.

And anybody that's chained to Ulster will undoubtedly have a strenuous time!

The *News-Letter* is the great Belfast daily, and while I was looking through it, Monday, for fear I had missed some of the pulpit and platform fulminations, I chanced upon another article which interested me deeply, as showing the Protestant attitude toward control of the schools. The article in question was a long account of the awarding of prizes at one of the big Belfast National schools, as a result of the religious education examination, and it was most illuminating.

The chairman began his remarks by saying that "nothing is pleasanter than to hear a pupil repeat faultlessly the answers to the one hundred and seven questions in the Shorter Catechism, without a stumble, placing the emphasis where it is due, and attending to the stops," and he went on to report that these one hundred and seven questions had been asked orally of each of 396 children, that there was not a single failure, and that practically all the children were in the first honour list—that is, had answered faultlessly the whole one hundred and seven.

And then another speaker, a clergyman, of course, like the first, told impressively of the meaning of education. It was, he said, the duty of every child to store his mind with all manner of knowledge and to seek diligently to gain information from day to day. But religion was the sum and complement of all educa-

tion. Without it, all other acquirements would be little better than the beautiful flush upon the consumptive's cheek, the precursor of sure death and decay. He reminded them that even the very youngest there was guilty in the sight of God, for that awful word sinner described them all.

Then a third speaker remarked that while the staff of the school was doing a fine work in teaching the boys and girls to read and write and cast up accounts, that that wasn't nearly so fine as teaching them the catechism and encouraging them to study their Bibles. And then a fourth speaker emphasised this; and then there was a vote of thanks to all the speakers, and the prize Bibles were distributed, and everybody went away happy—at least, the adults were all happy, and I can only hope the children were.

From all which it is evident that the Presbyterians will fight for their schools as hard, if not harder, than the Catholics will for theirs. But to me, the thought of those poor children being drilled and drilled in the proper answers to the 107 questions of the Catechism, until they could answer them all glibly and without stopping to think, is a painful and depressing one. I suppose that is the way good Orangemen are made; but the Catechism has always seemed to me a rickety ladder to climb to heaven by.

I was fortunate enough to witness another peculiar symptom of Belfast's temper, that afternoon, when I went down to the Custom House, which stands near the river. It is a large building occupying a full block, and there is a wide esplanade all around it; and this

esplanade has, from time immemorial, been the platform which any speaker, who could find room upon it, was privileged to mount, and where he might promulgate any doctrine he could get the crowd to listen to.

There was a great throng of people about the place, that afternoon, and a liberal sprinkling of policemen scattered through it; and then I perceived that it wasn't one big crowd but a lot of smaller crowds, each listening to a different orator, whose voices met and clashed in the air in a most confusing manner. And I wish solemnly to assert that the list which follows is a true list in every detail.

At the corner of the building, a reformed drunkard, with one of those faces which are always in need of shaving, stood, Bible in hand, recounting his experiences. At least, he said he had reformed; but the pictures he painted of the awful depravity of his past had a lurid tinge which held his auditors spell-bound, and it was evident from the way he smacked his lips over them that he was proud of having been such a devil of a fellow.

Next to him a smartly-dressed negro was selling bottles of medicine, which, so far as I could judge from what I heard, was guaranteed to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to. The formula for this wonderful preparation, he asserted, had been handed down through his family from his great-great-grandmother, who had been a famous African voodoo doctor, and it could be procured nowhere else. The open-mouthed Belfasters listened to all this with a deference and patience which no American audience would have shown, and the fakir took in many shillings.

Next to him, a company of the Salvation Army was holding a meeting after the explosive fashion familiar all the world over; and at the farther corner, a white-bearded little fellow was describing the horrors of hell with an unction and exactitude far surpassing Dante. I don't know what his formula was for avoiding these horrors, for I didn't wait to hear his peroration.

Just around the corner, two blind men were singing dolefully, with a tin cup on the pavement before them, and straining their ears for the rattle of a copper that never came; and farther along, a sharp-faced Irishman was delivering a speech, which I judged to be political, but it was so interspersed with anecdote and invective and personal reminiscence, that, though I listened a long time, I couldn't make out who he was talking against, or which side he was on. His audience seemed to follow him without difficulty, however, and laughed and applauded; and then a little fellow with a black moustache advised the crowd, in a loud voice, not to listen to him, for he was a jail-bird. I saw the constables edge in a little closer; but the speaker took the taunt in good part, admitted that he had done twelve months for some offence, and thanked the crowd with tears in his voice because they had raised two pounds a week, during that time, for the support of his family. The crowd cheered, and the fellow who had tried to start trouble hastened to take himself off. Thinking over all which, now, it occurs to me that the speech may have been a labour speech, and not a political one at all.

I gave it up, at last, and moved on to where a man was making an impassioned plea for contributions for

an orphan asylum. He had a number of sample orphans of both sexes ranged about him, and he painted a lively picture of the good his institution was doing; but how he hoped to extract donations from a crowd so evidently down at heel I don't see. Next to him, a frightful cripple, who could stand erect only by leaning heavily upon two canes, was telling the crowd how exceedingly difficult it was for a rich man to get into heaven. Next to him, a lot of women were holding some sort of missionary meeting; and just around the last corner, a roughly-dressed man, with coarse, red-bearded face, whose canvas placard described him as a "Medical Herbalist," was selling medicines of his own concoction.

He had no panacea, but a separate remedy for every ill; and I listened to his patter for a long time, though obviously he didn't welcome my presence. He proved that slippery-elm was harmless by eating some of it, and argued that plantain, "which ignorant people regarded as a weed, made the best medicine a man could put into his inside," and he proved this proposition by saying that it must be so because plantain had no other known use, and it was inconceivable that the Lord would have taken the trouble to create it without some purpose. He also proved that he was a capable doctor because he was not a doctor at all, but a working-man, and it was the working-man who made the world go round. Inconceivable as it may seem, this ignorant and maudlin talk was listened to seriously and even respectfully, and he sold a lot of his medicines. Medicine seems to be one of the dissipations of the Belfast folk.

The largest crowd of all was gathered before a man

who held the centre of the fourth side of the esplanade, and who was talking, or rather shouting, against Home Rule. He was garbed as a clergyman, and he wore an Orange badge, and he was listened to with religious attention as he painted the iniquity of the Catholic church and the horrible dangers of Catholic domination. His references to King Billy and the Boyne and the walls of Derry were many and frequent, and he had all sorts of newspaper clippings in his pockets, from which he read freely, and though he was very hoarse and bathed in perspiration, he showed no sign of stopping. He intimated that, once Home Rule was established, the revival of the inquisition would be but a matter of a short time, that no Protestant would be allowed to own property, that no Protestant labourer could expect employment anywhere until he had abjured his religion, that their children would be taken away from them and reared in Catholic schools, and he called upon them to arm and stand firm, to offer their lives upon the altar of their country, and not retreat a step before the aggressions of the Scarlet Woman. I don't know how much of this farrago his audience believed, but their faces were intent and serious, and I fear they believed much more than was good for them. I happened upon a song of Chesterton's the other day which brought those strained and intent faces vividly before me:

The folks that live in black Belfast, their heart is in their mouth;
They see us making murders in the meadows of the South;
They think a plow's a rack, they do, and cattle-calls are creeds,
And they think we're burnin' witches, when we're only burnin' weeds.

Those lines are scarcely an exaggeration; and after I had stood there listening for half an hour, I began to feel uneasily that perhaps, after all, there is in Ulster a dour fanaticism which may lead to an ugly conflict. Those political adventurers who have preached armed resistance so savagely, without really meaning a word of it, may have raised a Frankenstein which they will find themselves unable to control.

As I turned away, at last, sick at heart that such things should be, I passed close by a little group of men who were standing on the sidewalk opposite, listening to the denunciations of Rome with flushed faces and clenched hands.

"Let's have a go at him!" said one of them hoarsely; and then he caught my eye, as I lingered to see what would happen. "What do you think of that, anyway, sir?" he asked.

"I think it's outrageous," I said. "But I wouldn't raise a row, if I were you boys; you'll just be playing into his hands if you do."

Their leader considered this for a moment.

"I guess you're right, sir," he agreed, at last. "Come on, boys," and they slouched away around the corner.

But perhaps, afterwards, when they had got a few more drinks, they came back again. It is a peculiarity of Belfast that the public houses are allowed to open at two o'clock Sunday afternoon, and they are crammed from that time forward with a thirsty crowd.

There is nothing of antiquarian interest at Belfast, and its public buildings, though many and various, are in no way noteworthy. The sycophancy of the

THE CITY HALL, BELFAST

HIGH STREET, BELFAST

town is evidenced by a tall memorial to Prince Albert, not quite so ugly however, as the one at London; while in front of the city hall stands a heroic figure of Victoria. There is a statue to the Marquis of Dufferin, and one to Harland the ship-builder, and one to Sir James Haslett; and many militant divines, in flowing robes, are immortalised in marble. But search the streets as you may, you will find no statue to any Irish patriot or Irish poet.

Nor will you find a street named after one—yes, there is Patrick Street, but it is a very short and unimportant street, and may easily escape notice. The shadow of the Victorian Age lies deeply over the place. The greatest quay is Albert Quay, and the ship channel is Victoria Channel, and the square at the custom house is Albert Square, and a little farther along is Victoria Square, and just around the corner is Arthur Square, and the principal avenue is Royal Avenue, and the broad street which leads into it is York Street, and the street next to it is Queen Street, and leading off of that is Kent Street, and a little distance away is Albert Street leading up to Great Victoria Street, and I am sure that somewhere in the town there is a Prince Consort Street, though I didn't happen upon it!

The churches are all modern and uninteresting, though, strangely enough, the Catholic ones are as large and ornate as any. You wouldn't think it from the way Ulster talks, but about a fourth of the population of Belfast is Catholic. There are two small museums, neither of which is worth visting; in a word, the whole interest of Belfast is in its shops, its factories and its commerce.

The shops are wonderfully attractive, especially, of course, in objects made of linen. For Belfast is the world-centre of the linen trade, whose foundations were laid by the Huguenots who found a refuge here after Louis XIV banished them from France. It was the one Irish industry which England did not interfere with, because England produced no linen; and consequently it prospered enormously, until to-day there are single factories at Belfast where four thousand people bend over a thousand looms or watch ten thousand spindles, and the annual value of the trade is more than sixty million dollars. There are great tobacco factories, too, covering acres of ground; and the biggest rope-walk in the world; and a distillery which covers nineteen acres and—but the list is interminable.

The most interesting and spectacular of all these mighty industries will be found along the river banks, where the great ship-building yards are ranged, where such monsters as the *Olympic* and the fated *Titanic* were built and launched, and where the rattle and clangour of steel upon steel tells of the labour of twenty thousand men. And surely the clang and clatter of honest toil which rises from Belfast on week days must be more pleasing to the Almighty than the clang and clatter which rises from it on Sunday! I should think He would be especially disgusted with the noises which emanate from about the Custom House!

CHAPTER XXX

THE GRAVE OF ST. PATRICK

THE shops of Belfast, with their embroidered linens (duty, forty-five per cent!), proved a magnet too great for Betty to resist, but I hied me away, next day, into County Down, on a pilgrimage to the grave which is said to hold the three great apostles of Erin—Saint Brigid and Saint Patrick and Saint Columba. It is in the churchyard of the village of Downpatrick that the grave lies, and the thirty mile run thither from Belfast is through a green and fertile country covered with broad fields of flax. There are raths and tumuli here and there, and a few ruins topping the neighbouring slopes, but it is not until one reaches Downpatrick that one comes upon a really impressive memorial of the old days.

The cathedral is visible long before the train reaches the town, standing on the edge of a high bluff overlooking the valley of the Quoile, and it was to it I made my way from the station, up a very steep street, for Downpatrick, following the fashion of Irish towns, is built on the side of a hill—and also follows the fashion in having an Irish Street and an English Street and even a Scotch Street, the surviving names, I suppose, of the quarters where the people of those various nations once lived close together for mutual protection.

The cathedral was locked, as Protestant churches

have a way of being; but the caretaker lives near by and came running when his wife told him that there was a strange gentleman wished to see the church. He was a very Scotch Irishman, and as he took me around the bare, white interior, he said proudly: "There's not much high church about this. Not a bit of flummery will we have here—no candles or vestments or anything of that sort. Our people wouldn't stand it—it savours too much of Romanism."

"And yet," I said, "it was Saint Patrick who founded this very church, and you have him and Saint Brigid and Saint Columba buried in your churchyard."

"Yes, and we're proud to have them," he retorted quickly, "for they weren't Romanists—they were just Christians, and good ones, too. The Protestants of Ireland can honour Patrick and Brigid just as much as the Catholics do. It wasn't till long after their day that the Irish church made submission to Rome."

There is a modicum of truth in this, for, though it is probable that St. Patrick was regularly ordained a bishop and is even sometimes asserted to have been sent on his mission by Pope Celestine himself, the ties which bound Irish Catholics to Rome were for many centuries very slight indeed, and it was not until after the Norman conquest that the authority of Rome was fully acknowledged; and this independence has persisted, in a way, even to the present day; for while Irish Catholics, of course, acknowledge absolutely the supremacy of the Holy See in all spiritual affairs, they have always been quick to resent its interference in things temporal, and their tolerance toward other re-

ligions than their own stands almost unique in history. It is, perhaps, a racial characteristic, for the Pagan Irish, during all the years of Patrick's mission among them, never seriously persecuted him and never slew a Christian.

Here at the spot where that mission began it is fitting that I should say a word of it. Of Saint Patrick himself very little is certainly known, for he was a man of deeds and not of words, and left no record of his life; but there seems no valid reason to doubt the traditional account of him; that he was born at Kilpatrick, in Scotland, somewhere about 390; that his father was a Roman citizen and a Christian; that, when about sixteen years of age, he was captured by a band of raiding Irish, carried back to Ireland as a slave, sold to an Ulster chief named Milcho, and for six years tended his master's flocks on the slopes of Slemish, one of the Antrim hills. In the end he escaped and made his way back to his home in Britain; but once there his thoughts turned back to Erin, and in his dreams he heard the cries of the Pagan Irish imploring him to return, bearing the torch of Christianity.

The voices grew too strong to be resisted, and in 432 he was back on the Irish coast again, having in the meantime been ordained a bishop of the Catholic Church; and he sailed along the coast until he came to Strangford Lough, where he turned in and landed. His purpose was to go back to Slemish and ransom himself from the master from whom he had escaped, but he paused at a large sabhall, or barn, and said his first Mass on Irish soil. It was to that spot he afterwards returned, when the hand of death was upon him, to

end his days; and the little village that stands there is Sabhall, or Saul, to this day. He went on, after that, to the great dun, or fort, of the kings of Ulster, which we ourselves shall visit presently, and from which Downpatrick takes its name. Then, finding his old master dead, he began his life-work. His success was so extraordinary that at the end of thirty years, the conversion of the Irish was complete.

At last, feeling his end near, he made his way back to the sanctuary at Saul, died there, and was brought for burial to this bluff overlooking the great rath below. Legend has it that Saint Brigid wove his winding-sheet. She herself, when she died, was buried before the high altar of her church at Kildare; and there are two stories of why her body was removed to St. Patrick's grave. One is that, in 878, her followers, fearing that her grave would be desecrated by the Danes, removed her body to Downpatrick and buried it in the grave with the great apostle, where the remains of St. Columba had been brought from Iona and placed nearly two centuries before for the same reason. The other story is that the bones of St. Brigid and St. Columba both were brought here in 1185 by John de Courcy, to whom Ulster had been granted by the English king,—and who had surprised and captured Downpatrick eight years previously,—in the hope of conciliating the people he had conquered. Either story may be true; but all that need concern us now is that there seems to be no question that the three great apostles of Ireland really do lie at rest within this grave.

De Courcy enlarged the cathedral, which, before that, had been a poor affair, dedicated it to Saint Pat-

THE GRAVE OF PATRICK, BRIGID AND COLUMBA

THE OLD CROSS AT DOWNPATRICK

rick, and caused effigies of the three saints to be placed above the east window with a Latin couplet over them:

> Hi tres in duno, tumulo tumulantur in uno
> Brigida, Patritius, atque Columba pius.

The stone which marks the grave is in the yard just outside the church—a great, irregular monolith of Mourne granite, weatherworn and untouched by human hand, except for an incised Celtic cross and the word "Patric" in rude Celtic letters—one monument, at least, in Ireland which is wholly dignified and worthy.

One other thing of antiquarian interest there is near by, and that is an ancient cross, said to have stood originally on the fort of the King of Ulster, but removed by De Courcy and set up in front of his castle in the centre of the town, as a sign of his sovereignty, where it was knocked to pieces when the castle was. The fragments have been put together, and battered and worn as it is, the carvings can still be dimly seen—the crucifixion in the centre, with stiff representations of Bible scenes below. It is ruder than most, as may be seen from the photograph opposite page 522, for the circle which surrounds the cross is merely indicated and not cut through. There has been much controversy as to the origin of this circle, which is the distinctive feature of the Celtic cross; but I have never yet seen any theory which seemed anything more than a guess —and not a particularly good guess, either.

Of the first church which was built here not a trace remains, and even of the structure of 1137 there is little left. For Downpatrick, with the priories and monasteries and hospitals and convents and other re-

ligious establishments which had grown up around the sacred grave of the saints, was one of the first objects of attack when Henry VIII began his suppression of the religious houses. Lord Grey marched hither at the head of a regiment of soldiers and plundered the place and set fire to it, so that only an empty shell was left. The crumbling and blackened ruin stood undisturbed for more than two hundred years, and when its restoration was finally undertaken, it was found that only five arches of the nave were solid enough to be retained. So the present structure is only about a century old, except for that one stretch of wall and a recessed doorway under the east window. The old effigies of Brigid and Patrick and Columba, which Grey pulled down and knocked to pieces, have been replaced in the niches above the window, but they are sadly mutilated. In the vestry is a portrait of Jeremy Taylor, who was Bishop of Down for nearly seventy years, but there is little else of interest in the church. The most imposing thing about it is its position at the edge of the high bluff, looking out across the valley of the Quoire to the Mourne mountains.

Just to the north of this bluff and almost in its shadow, close to the bank of a little stream, still stands the enormous rath built two thousand years ago by Celtchair, one of the heroes of the Red Branch of Ulster, and here he and the chiefs who came after him had their stronghold. So great was its fame that Ptolemy, in far off Egypt, heard of it, and it was gradually enlarged and strengthened until there were few in Ireland to equal it. The sea helped to guard it, for at high tide the water flowed up over the flats along the

Quoile and lapped against it; but the erection of sluice-gates farther down the stream has shut away the tide, and it stands now in the midst of a marsh.

To get to it, one passes along the wall of the jail—one of the largest I had seen anywhere in Ireland, and which Murray proudly says cost $315,000—and scrambles down into the marsh, and there before one is the rath. My picture of it, the top one opposite the next page, was taken from close beside the jail, many hundreds of yards away, and gives no idea of its size, except for the thread-like path which you may perceive running up one end, which is two or three feet wide, and fully seventy feet long.

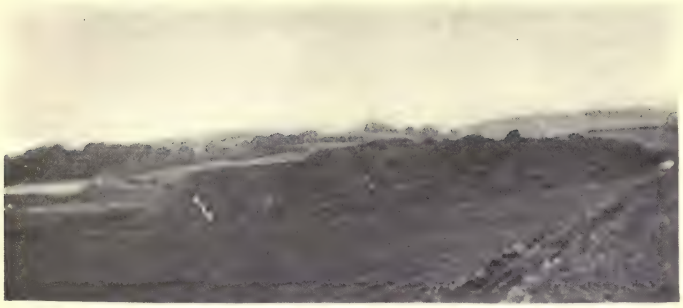
The rath is an immense circular rampart of earth, nearly three quarters of a mile in circumference, fifty feet high, and so steep that I had great difficulty in getting up it, even by the path. Around it runs a fosse or ditch some forty feet wide and nine or ten feet deep. This, of course, was deeper in the old days, and would remain filled with water even when the tide was out. Inside the circular rampart, the ground drops some twenty feet into a large enclosure, near the centre of which a great mound, surrounded by a ditch ten feet deep, towers sixty feet into the air.

The central mound corresponds to the keep or donjon tower of more modern forts, the last place of refuge and defence when the outer ramparts had been forced; and it was on this mound that the dwellings of the chiefs stood, rude enough, no doubt, though they were the palaces of kings. The tribal huts clustered in the enclosure about the foot of the mound; and so perfectly is the whole place preserved—though of course

there is now no trace of hut or palace—that one has little difficulty in picturing the busy life which went on there—the throngs of men and women and children, the tribal council gathered on the summit of the great mound to listen to the chief, the departure of expeditions for war or for the chase, the arrival of envoys from some other chieftain or perhaps of some minstrel, his harp slung across his shoulder. . . .

I tore myself away, at last, for there was another place I wished to visit, and it was three miles distant —the Holy Wells of Struell. The caretaker at the cathedral had pointed out the route, so I climbed back past the prison, and went down through the town and up Irish Street beyond, and over Gallows Hill, where some unfortunate Irishmen were hanged during the rebellion of '98. The road beyond ran between high hedge-rows and under arching trees, whose shade was very grateful, for the day was the hottest I had experienced in Ireland; and then it crossed the white high-road and ran close under a long stretch of wall which surrounded an enormous and ornate building. I asked a passer-by what it was, and he answered that it was a madhouse, and big as it was, was none too big. Murray supplies the information that it cost half a million.

There is a workhouse in the town which, from the look of it, must have cost $300,000—or say a million dollars for the three together, the jail, the workhouse and the asylum, every cent of it, of course, raised by taxation from the poorest people in the world! Sadly pondering this, I went on along the lane, and the heat made the way seem very long. But a girl I met as-



THE GREAT RATH AT DOWNPATRICK

THE INNER AND OUTER CIRCLES

THE CENTRAL MOUND

sured me that I had not much farther to go—only past the farm at the foot of the hill; and presently I came to the farm, a handsome one, with the dwelling-house surrounded by well-built barns and stables, and a man there directed me to the wells, down a little by-road. Five minutes later, I had reached the rude stone huts which cover the Holy Wells of Struell.

Down the middle of a pretty valley, a small stream leaps from rock to rock, pausing here and there in little pools, and these pools are the "wells." Each of them is protected by a stone-walled, stone-roofed cell, built in the old days when the wells were in their glory, and now falling to decay. Just beyond the wells is a group of thatched cottages, and a girl of eight or nine, seeing my approach, hurried out from one of them and volunteered to act as guide, scenting, of course, the chance to earn a penny. And she took me first to what she said was the drinking-well, a little grass-grown pool in a fence-corner, and though she seemed to expect me to drink, I didn't, for the water looked stale and scummy.

Then we climbed a wall, and walked over to a stone cubicle, which stood in the middle of a potato patch. This is the eye-well, and the cell over it is just large enough to permit a person to enter and kneel down above the water and bathe the affected parts. I took a picture of it which you will find opposite the next page. Then she led me to the largest well of all, the body well, or well of sins, where it is necessary to undress and immerse the whole body.

The stone building over the body well is divided into two parts by a solid wall, and one part is for men and

the other for women. The disrobing is done in the outer chamber, which has a low stone bench running around three sides, and then the penitent enters a small inner chamber, descends some six or seven steps into the pool of water, and, I suppose, places himself below the stream which falls into the pool from the end of a pipe. As its name indicates, this well was supposed to have the power of washing away all disease, both physical and moral, and time was when it was very popular. The effect of the cold bath was so exhilarating, and the sudden sense of freedom from sin and disease so uplifting, that the penitents would sometimes rush forth to proclaim their blessed state without pausing to resume their garments. Naturally a lot of impious Orangemen would gather to see the fun; and finally both the secular authorities and the Catholic clergy set their faces against the practices, with the result that they gradually fell into disuse. Only single pilgrims, or small companies, at most, come now to bathe in the magic waters, and their behaviour is most circumspect. The cells, themselves, are well-nigh in ruins. A chapel to Saint Patrick, from whom these waters derive their efficacy, was begun during the day of their popularity, but was never finished, and now only a fragment of it remains.

While I was manœuvring for a photograph of the well of sins, a middle-aged woman came out of a near-by cottage to advise me where to stand. She had seen many pictures taken of the well, she said, and the place that made the best picture was on top of the wall around her garden, and I climbed up on it, and found that she was right.

THE EYE WELL AT STRUELL

THE WELL OF SINS AT STRUELL

"'Tis a warm day," she went on, when I descended, "and your honour must be tired with the long walk. Will you not come in and sit a spell?"

"Thank you," I said; "I'll be glad to—it *is* hot," and I followed her into a lovely old kitchen, with floor of flags, and whitewashed walls gleaming with pots and pans, and with a tall dresser in one corner glittering with a brave array of china. In here it was quite cool, so that after the first moment, the open grate of glowing coals, with the usual bubbling pot above it and the usual kettle on the hob, felt very pleasant.

I expressed surprise that she was burning coal, and she said the landlords of the neighbourhood had shut up the peat-bogs, in order to make every one buy English coal; and it was very hard indeed on the poor people, who had always been used to getting their fuel for the labour of cutting it, besides shutting them off from earning a little money by selling the turf to the people in the town, who would rather have it than coal. But the landlords were always doing things like that, and it did no good to complain. She had two brothers in America, she said, and lived here at Struell and kept house for a third. She and her brother were both unmarried, and would probably always remain so. Then, of course, she wanted to know about my condition in life, and I described it as freely as she had described her own. And then she asked me if I wouldn't like a glass of milk, and when I said I would, she hastened to get it from the milk-house, through which a clear little stream trickled, and very sweet and cool it was.

And then we got to talking about Ulster's attitude

toward Home Rule. County Down, you should remember, is one of the nine counties which form the Province of Ulster, and is the most strongly Protestant of all of them outside of Belfast and Antrim, for only about one third of its 200,000 people are Catholic.

"God knows what will happen," said my hostess, very seriously. "I have been hearing a lot of wild talk, but paid no heed to it, for these Orangemen are always talkin' about this or that, and their talk means nothing. But I've come to think it may be more than just talk this time. I heard a few days since that all the Orangemen hereabouts have been getting together three evenings every week in a meadow over beyont, and an officer of the army comes there and drills them till it is too dark to see. And they say, too, that there is a gun ready for each of them, with plenty of powder and lead to put into it; and they've sleuthered a lot of poor boys into joinin' with them who have not the courage to say no. But I'm hoping it will pass by, and that no trouble will come of it. I am a Catholic myself, but we have never had any trouble with the Protestants. We get along very well together, and why shouldn't we? Some of my best friends are Protestants, and I know they wish us no harm. No, no, we are well-placed here, though them ones in the south do be calling us the black north."

I told her something of the destitution and misery I had seen in the south and west; but she showed no great sympathy—rather a contempt, I fancied, for people who could be so easy-going and unambitious. She herself seemed of a very different breed; and the shining kitchen, as clean as a new pin, proved what a de-

light and pride she took in her home and how energetic a housewife she was. Personally she was just as clean and tidy as her kitchen, with hair neatly brushed and a bit of white about her throat; and the apron she had on was a fresh one, newly-ironed—something I never saw upon any peasant woman of the south. She brought out an album of photographs, presently—photographs of herself and of her brother, and various photographs of the wells, and I promised to send her a print of mine, if it proved to be a good one. And then I bade her good-bye and started back the way I came; but I can still see her shrewd and kindly face, with the little wrinkles at the corners of the eyes, and the cool, sweet-smelling kitchen where I spent that pleasant hour.

I walked about the steep streets of Downpatrick quite a while, after I reached the town, and found them unusually quaint. Like so many other towns in Ireland, this one is all too evidently on the down grade. The tall houses, which were once the residences of the well-to-do, have been turned into tenements, and while they are not so dirty and repulsive as those of Dublin and Limerick, they are still bad enough. Others of the houses are empty and falling into ruin. One curious thing about the place is that from any quarter of it the town-hall is visible, standing in the hollow at the bottom of the hill, for the five principal streets start from it—Irish Street and English Street and Scotch Street and two others whose names I have forgotten, but which were, perhaps, the neutral ground of trade.

I made my way down to the station, at last, and as

the train started, a young fellow in the same compartment with me bade a tearful farewell to the relatives and friends who had gathered to see him off, and sat for some time thereafter weeping unaffectedly into his handkerchief. When he was a little calmer, I asked him if he was going to America. He said no; he was going only to Belfast, but that was a long way!

It is really only about thirty miles; but thirty miles is a great journey to the average Irishman. For the Irishman is no traveller; he is quite content to spend his life within the circle of one small horizon, and never so happy as when sitting at his own fireside. Indeed, he is apt to regard with suspicion those who have nothing better to do than wander about the world. Mayo tinkers have always had a bad name in Ireland, not because they do anything especially to deserve it, but merely because they make their living in an unnatural fashion by roaming from place to place. Surely there must be something wrong with a man who does that!

That night, at Belfast, we went to a variety show. The Wild West film seems as popular here as in the rest of Ireland, for a particularly sensational one, where the heroine escaped from the Indians by going hand over hand along a rope above a deep ravine, into which the Indians were precipitated by the hero, who cut the rope when they started to cross by it, was received with great enthusiasm. There were also some scattered cheers when a conjuror, with carefully calculated effect, produced portraits of the King and Queen from some-

where and waved them before the audience. But the cheers were thin and forced, and by far the most of those present sat grimly silent and stared at the pictures with set faces.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE VALLEY OF THE BOYNE

I HAD one other trip to make in Ireland. That was to the scene of the battle of the Boyne, to the tombs of the kings at Dowth and Newgrange, and to the ruins near-by of two of the most famous and beautiful of the old abbeys, Mellifont and Monasterboice. Readers of this book will remember that, early in the narrative, Betty and I had journeyed up from Dublin to Drogheda for the purpose of visiting these historic places, but had been prevented by a combination of unforeseen circumstances.

It was, then, for Drogheda that I set out next morning, Betty having voted for another day in the Belfast shops; and by a singular coincidence it was the first day of July, the anniversary of that other day in 1690 when the army of William of Orange defeated the battalions of Irishmen who had rallied around James—and surely never had braver men a poorer leader! But it was not really the anniversary, for the change in the calendar has shifted the date to July 12th, and it is on that day the Orangemen celebrate.

It is an eighty mile run from Belfast to Drogheda, and one of the most picturesque and interesting in the east of Ireland; and the weather god was kind to the last, for a brighter, sweeter day it would be impossible to imagine. As the train leaves the city, there are glimpses to the right of the purple hills of Antrim;

and then the train pauses at the busy town of Lisbun, and continues on over the Ulster canal, past the battlefield of Moira, past the beautiful woods of Lurgan, and then through a prosperous and fertile country, with broad fields of grain and flax, and pretty villages, and so into Portadown, once the stronghold of the McCahans.

I was travelling third that day, as always when alone, and the compartment had four or five people in it; and I had noticed that one of them, a man poorly clad and with a kit of tools in a little bag, had been looking anxiously from the window for some time. Finally he leaned over and touched me on the knee.

"Can you tell me, sir, if this is the train to Derry?" he asked.

"No; it's going to Dublin," I said; and just then it rumbled to a stop, and he opened the door and slipped hastily out.

What happened to him I don't know, but he was in no way to blame for the mistake, which was due to the abominable custom they have in Ireland of starting trains for different places from the same platform, within a minute or two of each other. That morning, at Belfast, there had been a long line of coaches beside one of the platforms; no engines were as yet attached to them, but the front part of the line was destined for Dublin, and the rear portion for Derry, but there was no way to tell where one train ended and the other began, and no examination was made of the passengers' tickets before the trains started.

I was wary, for I had been caught in exactly the same way once before, at Claremorris Junction, and

had escaped being carried back to Westport only by stopping the train, amid great excitement, after it had started. So, that morning at Belfast, I had assured myself by repeated inquiry of various officials that the carriage I was in was going the way I wanted to go; but any traveller unwary or unaccustomed to the vagaries of Irish roads, such as this poor fellow, might easily have been caught napping. Where it is necessary to start two trains close together from the same platform, it would seem to be only ordinary precaution to examine the passengers' tickets before locking the doors.

From Portadown, the road runs along the valley of the Bann, past the ruins of the old fortress of Redmond O'Hanlon, an outlaw almost as famous in Irish history as Robin Hood is in English; and then it passes Scarva, with a mighty cairn marking the grave of Fergus Fogha, who fell in battle here sixteen centuries ago. Here, too, are the ruins of one of General Monk's old castles, and on a neighbouring slope the grass-green walls of a great rath, the stronghold of some more ancient chieftain. Indeed, there are raths and cashels and ivy-draped ruins all about, the work of Irish and Dane and Norman and later English, for here was a pass across the bog from Down into Armagh, and so a chosen spot for defence and the exacting of tribute.

Then the train is carried by a viaduct half a mile long over the deep and wild ravine of Craigmore, leaves Newry on the left and climbs steadily, with beautiful views of the Mourne mountains to the right, plunges at last through a deep cutting, and comes out under the shadow of the Forkhill mountains, with the mighty mass of Slieve Gullion overtopping them. Just

beyond is Mowry Pass, the only pass between north and south, except round by the coast, and so, of course, the scene of many a desperate conflict.

From this point on, for many miles, the scenery is very wild and beautiful, and every foot of it has been a battle-ground. Just before the train reaches Dundalk, it passes close to the hill of Faughart, topped by a great earthwork, and it was here that Edward Bruce was slain in battle a year after he had been crowned king of Ireland; and farther on is another rath, the Dun of Dealgan, where dwelt Cuchulain, chief of the Red Branch Knights, and one of the great heroes of Irish legend. It was from Dun Dealgan that Dundalk took its name, and Dundalk was for centuries the key to the road to Ulster and the northern limit of the English pale, which had Dublin for its centre. Merely to enumerate the battles which have been fought here would fill a page; but the train rumbles on, past a little church which uses the fragment of a round tower for a belfry, past the modern castle of the Bellinghams, built from the proceeds of a famous brewery, past a wayside Calvary, and so at last into Drogheda. And when I arrived there, I had completed the circuit of Ireland.

The car which was to make the round of the Boyne valley was waiting outside the station, at the top of that long, ugly street which looked so familiar now that I saw it again; and after waiting awhile for other passengers and finding there was none, we drove down into the town, where another passenger was waiting—a clergyman with grey hair and blue eyes and white refined face, Church of England by his garb, and, as I found out afterwards, Oxford by residence.

And here again it looked for a moment as though I was to be balked a second time of seeing Mellifont and Monasterboice, for it was Tuesday, and on Tuesday, it seemed, the round was by way of Slane; but the driver left the choice of routes to his passengers, and the clergyman said he didn't care where we went so we saw the Boyne battlefield; and with that we set off westward along the pleasant road, and soon, far ahead, we saw the top of the great obelisk opposite the place where Schomberg fell. The road dips steeply into King William's Glen, along which the centre of the Protestant army advanced to the river, and then we were on the spot where the cause of Protestant ascendency in Ireland triumphed finally and irrevocably and where the Cromwellian settlements were sealed past overthrow.

William, with his English and his Dutch, had marched down from Dundalk, and James, with his Irish and his French, had marched up from Dublin, and here on either side of this placid little river, where the hills slope down to the Oldbridge ford, the armies took their station; and here, a little after ten o'clock in the morning, brave old Schomberg, whose tomb, you will remember, we saw in St. Patrick's at Dublin (how long ago that seems!), led his Dutch guards and his regiment of Huguenots into the water, across the ford, and up the bank on the other side. There, for a moment, his troops fell into disorder before the fierce attack of the Irish, and as he tried to rally them, a band of Irish horse rushed upon him, circled round him and left him dead upon the ground. Almost at the same moment, the white-haired Walker, who had ex-

horted the defenders of Derry never to surrender, was shot dead while urging on the men of Ulster. But though the Irish were able to hold their ground at first, and even to drive their assailants back into the river, a long flanking movement which William had set on foot earlier in the day, caught them unprepared, and they gave way, at last, before superior numbers and superior discipline.

Long before that, King James had fled the field, and, without stopping, spurred on to Dublin, thirty miles away. He reached that city at ten o'clock that night, tired, hungry, and complaining bitterly to Lady Tyrconnell that the Irish had run faster than he had ever seen men do before. Lady Tyrconnell was an Irishwoman, and her eyes blazed. "In that, as in all other things," she said, "it is evident that Your Majesty surpasses them"; and Patrick Sarsfield, who had been placed that day in command of the king's bodyguard, and so had got nowhere near the fighting, sent back to the Protestants his famous challenge, "Change kings, and we will fight it over again!"

Well, all that was more than two centuries ago; there is no more placidly beautiful spot in Ireland than this green valley, with the silver stream rippling past; but the staunch Protestants of the north still baptise their babies with water dipped from the river below the obelisk. And they are not altogether wrong, for that river is the river of their deliverance; and perhaps, in some distant day, when new justice has wiped out the memory of ancient wrong, Irish Catholics will agree with Irish Protestants that it was better William should have won that day than James.

My clerical companion, guide-book in hand, had carefully noted every detail of the field, and it was evident from his shining eyes how his soul was stirred by the thought of that old victory. But our driver sat humped on his box, smoking silently, his face very grim. This job of driving Protestant clergymen to Boyne battlefield must be a trying one for the followers of Brigid and Patrick! But at last my companion had seen enough, and closed his book with a little sigh of happiness and satisfaction; and our driver whistled to his horse, and we climbed slowly out of the valley.

We had about a mile of hedge-lined road, after that, and, looking down from it, we caught glimpses of wooded demesnes across the river, with the chimneys of handsome houses showing above the trees—and they, too, are the symbols of William's victory, for they are the homes of the conquerors, the visible signs of that social order which Boyne battle established, and which still endures.

And then our driver, who had recovered his good-humour, pointed out to us a great mound in the midst of a level field—a circular mound, with steep sides and flat top, and a certain artificial appearance, though it seemed too big to be artificial. And yet it is, for it was built about two thousand years ago as a sepulchre for the mighty dead.

For all this left bank of the river was the so-called Brugh-na-Boinne, the burying-ground of the old Milesian kings of Tara; and two great tumuli are left to show that the kings of Erin, like the kings of ancient Egypt and the kings of the still more ancient Moundbuilders, were given sepulchres worthy of their

THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY

ENTRANCE TO DOWTH TUMULUS

greatness. Yet there is a difference. The tombs of the Moundbuilders were mere earthen tumuli heaped above the dead; the pyramids of the Egyptians were carefully wrought in stone. The tumuli of the ancient Irish stand midway between the two. First great slabs were placed on end, and other slabs laid across the uprights; and in this vaulted chamber the ashes of the dead were laid; and then loose stones were heaped above it until it was completely covered. Sometimes a passage would be left, but that would be a secret known to few, and when the tomb was done it would seem to be nothing more than a great circular mound of stones. As the years passed, the stones would be covered gradually with earth, and then with grass and bushes, and trees would grow upon it, until there would be nothing left to distinguish it from any other hill. Only within the last half century have the tumuli been explored, and then it was to find that the Danes had spared not even these sanctuaries, but had entered them and despoiled the inner chambers. Nevertheless, they remain among the most impressive human monuments to be found anywhere.

This first tumulus we came to is the tumulus of Dowth, and a woman met us at the gate opening into the field where it stands, gave us each a lighted candle, and led the way to the top of an iron ladder which ran straight down into the bowels of the earth. We descended some twenty feet into a cavity as cold as ice; then, following the light of the woman's candle, we squeezed along a narrow passage made of great stones tilted together at the top, so low in places that we had to bend double, so close together in others that we had

to advance sideways blessing our slimness; and finally we came to the great central chamber where the dead were placed.

It is about ten feet square, and its walls, like those of the passage, are formed by huge blocks of stone set on end. Then other slabs were laid a-top them, and then on one another, each slab overlapping by eight or ten inches the one below, until a last great stone closed the central aperture and the roof was done. In the centre the chamber is about twelve feet high. Many of the stones are carved with spirals and concentric circles and wheel-crosses and Ogham writing—yes, and with the initials of hundreds of vandals!

In the centre of the floor is a shallow stone basin, about four feet square, used perhaps for some ceremony in connection with the burials—sacrifice naturally suggests itself, such as tradition connects with Druid worship; and opening from the chamber are three recesses, about six feet deep, also constructed of gigantic stones, and in these, it is surmised, the ashes of the dead were laid. From one of these recesses a passage, whose floor is a single cyclopean stone eight feet long, leads to another recess, smaller than the first ones. When the tomb was first entered, little heaps of burned bones were found, many of them human—for it should be remembered that the ancient Irish burned their dead before enclosing them in cists or burying them in tumuli. There were also unburned bones of pigs and deer and birds, and glass and amber beads, and copper pins and rings; and before the Danes despoiled it, there were doubtless torques of gold, and brooches set with jewels —but the robbers left nothing of that sort behind them.

Nobody knows when this mound was built; but the men who cut the spirals and circles—and in one place a leaf, not incised, but standing out in bold relief—must have had tools of iron or bronze to work with; so the date of the mound's erection can be fixed approximately at about the beginning of the Christian era. For the rest, all is legend. But as one stands there in that cyclopean chamber, the wonder of the thing, its uncanniness, its mystery, grow more and more overwhelming, until one peers around nervously, in the dim and wavering candle-light, expecting to see I know not what. With me, that sensation passed; for I happened suddenly to remember how George Moore and A. E. made a pilgrimage to this spot, one day, and sat in this dark chamber, cross-legged like Yogin, trying to evoke the spirits of the Druids, and just when they were about to succeed, or so it seemed, the vision was shattered by the arrival of two portly Presbyterian preachers.

There is another entrance to the tumulus, about half way up, which opens into smaller and probably more recent chambers; and after a glance at them, we clambered to the top. Far off to the west, we could see the hill of Tara, where the old kings who are buried here held their court and gave great banquets in a hall seven hundred feet long, of which scarce a trace remains; and a little nearer, to the north, is the hill of Slane, where, on that Easter eve sixteen centuries ago, St. Patrick lighted his first Paschal fire in Ireland, in defiance of a Druidic law which decreed that in this season of the Festival of Spring, no man should kindle a fire in Meath until the sacred beacon blazed from Tara. You

may guess the consternation of the priests when, through the gathering twilight, they first glimpsed that little flame which Patrick had kindled on the summit of Slane, just across the valley. That, I think, is easily the most breathless and dramatic moment in Irish history. The king sent his warriors to see what this defiance meant, and Patrick was brought to Tara, and he came into the assembly chanting a verse of Scripture: "Some in chariots and some on horses, but we in the name of the Lord our God." And so his mission began.

On the other side of the mound, across a field and beyond a wall, I could see what seemed to be an ivy-draped ruin, and I asked our guide what it might be, and she said it was the birthplace of John Boyle O'Reilly. It was but a short walk, and my companion said he would wait for me; so I hastened down the mound and across the field and over the wall, and found that what I had seen was indeed a tall old house, draped with ivy and falling into ruin. Just back of it is a church, also in ruins, and again its wall is a granite monument to O'Reilly, more remarkable for its size than for any other quality. There is a bust of the poet at the top, and on either side a weeping female figure, and a long inscription in Gaelic, which of course I couldn't read; and which may have been very eloquent. But if it had been for me to write his epitaph, I would have chosen a single verse of his as all-sufficient:

Kindness is the Word.

Then, as I was wading out through the meadow to get a picture of the house, I met with a misadventure,

for, disturbed by my passage, a bee started up out of the grass, struck me on the end of the nose, clung wildly there an instant, and then stung viciously. It was with tears of anguish streaming down my cheeks that I snapped the picture opposite the preceding page.

Dowth Castle is not the ancestral home of the O'Reillys; that stood on Tullymongan, above the town of Cavan, of which they were lords for perhaps a thousand years. Dowth Castle, on the other hand, was built by Hugh de Lacy, as an outpost of the English pale; but it came at last into the hands of an eccentric Irishman who, about a century ago, bequeathed it and some of the land about it as a school for orphans and a refuge for widows. The Netterville Institution, as it was called, came to comprise also a National school, and of this school John Boyle O'Reilly's father, William David O'Reilly, was master for thirty-five years. He and his wife lived in the castle, here in 1844 the poet was born, and here he spent the first eleven years of his life. What fate finally overtook the castle I don't know, but only the ivy-draped outer walls remain. The trim modern buildings of the Institution cluster in its shadow.

I made my way back to the car, where my companion, who was not interested in O'Reilly, was awaiting me somewhat impatiently, and I think he regarded the bee which had stung me as an agent of Providence. But we set off again, and the car climbed up and up to the summit of the ridge which overlooks the river; and presently we were rolling along a narrow road bordered with lofty elms, and then, in a broad pasture

to our right, we saw another mound, far larger than the first, and knew that it was Newgrange.

Four mighty stones stand like sentinels before it. The largest of them is eight or nine feet high above the ground and at least twenty in girth; and they are all that are left of a ring of thirty-five similar monsters which once guarded the great cairn with a circle a quarter of a mile around. Like the tumulus of Dowth, this of Newgrange is girdled by a ring of great stone blocks, averaging eight or ten feet in length, and laid closely end to end; and on top of them is a wall of uncemented stones three or four feet high. Behind the wall rises the cairn, overgrown with grass and bushes and even trees; but below the skin of earth is the pile of stones, heaped above the chambers of the dead.

The entrance here is a few feet above the level of the ground, and is the true original entrance, which the one at Dowth is not, for the level of the ground there has risen. This little door consists of two upright slabs and a transverse one. Below it is placed a great stone, covered with a rich design of that spiral ornamentation peculiar to the ancient Irish—emblematic, it is said, of eternity, without beginning and without end. The stone above the door is also carved, and my photograph, opposite this page, gives a very fair idea of how the entrance looks.

We found a woman waiting for us—she had heard the rattle of our wheels far down the road, and had hastened from her house near by to earn sixpence by providing us with candles; and she led the way through the entrance into the passage beyond. As at Dowth, it is formed of huge slabs inclined against each other,

ENTRANCE TO NEWGRANGE

THE RUINS OF MELLIFONT

but here they have given way under the great weight heaped upon them, and the passage grew lower and lower, until the woman in front of us was crawling on her hands and knees. The clergyman, who was behind her, examined the low passage by the light of his candle, and then said he didn't think he'd try it.

"Oh, come along, sir," urged the woman's voice. "'Tis only a few yards, and then you can stand again. If you was a heavy man, now, I wouldn't be advisin' it; I've seen more than one who had to be pulled out by his feet; but for a slim man the likes of you sure it is nothing."

He still held back, so I squeezed past him, and went down on hands and knees, and crawled slowly forward in three-legged fashion holding my candle in one hand, over the strip of carpet which had been laid on the stones to protect the clothing of visitors. As our guide had said, the passage soon opened up so that it was possible to stand upright again. I called back encouragement to my companion, and he finally crawled through too; and then, as I held my candle aloft, I saw that we had come out into a great vaulted chamber at least twenty feet high. Here, as at Dowth, the sides are formed of mammoth slabs, and the vault of other slabs laid one upon the other, each row projecting beyond the row below until the centre is reached. Here too there are three recesses; but everything is on a grander scale than at Dowth, and the ornamentation is much more elaborate. It consists of intricate and beautifully formed spirals, coils, lozenges and chevrons; and here, also, the vandal had been at work, scratching his initials, sometimes even his detested name, upon these

sacred stones. There was one especially glaring set of initials right opposite the entrance, deeply and evidently freshly cut, and I asked the woman how such a thing could happen.

"Ah, sir," she said, "that was done by a young man who you would never think would be doing such a thing. He come here one day, not long since, and with him was a young woman, and they were very quiet and nice-appearing, so after I had brought them in, I left them to theirselves, for I had me work to do; but when I came in later, with another party, that was what I saw. And I made the vow then that never again would I be leaving any one alone here, no matter how respectable they might look."

We commended her wisdom, and turned back to an inspection of the carvings. It was noticeable that there was no attempt at any general scheme of decoration, for the spirals and coils were scattered here and there without any reference to each other, some of them in inaccessible corners which proved they had been made before the stones were placed in position. Evidently they had been carved wherever the whim of the sculptor suggested; and so, in spite of their delicacy and beauty, they are in a way supremely childish.

But there is nothing childish about the tomb itself. Nobody knows from what forgotten quarry these great slabs were cut. Wherever it was, they had to be lifted out and dragged to the top of this hill and set in position—and many of them weigh more than a hundred tons. The passage from the central chamber to the edge of the mound is sixty-two feet long; the mound

itself is eight hundred feet around and fifty high, and some one has estimated that the stones which compose it weigh more than a hundred thousand tons.

For whom was it built? Perhaps for Conn, the Hundred Fighter, for tradition records that he was buried here, and he was worthy of such a tomb. If it was for Conn—and of course that is only a guess—it dates from about 200 A. D., for tradition has it that it was in 212 that Conn was treacherously slain at Tara, while preparing for the great festival of the Druids. Conn's son, Art, was the last of the Pagan kings to be buried in the Druid fashion, for Art's great son, Cormac, who came to the throne in 254, chose another sepulchre. He seems to have got some inkling of Christianity, perhaps from traders from other lands who visited his court. At any rate, he turned away from the Druids, and they put a curse upon him and caused a devil to attack him while at table, so that the bone of a salmon stuck in his throat and he died. But with his last breath he forbade his followers to bury him at Brugh-na-Boinne, in the tumulus with Conn and the rest, because that was a grave of idolaters; he worshipped another God who had come out of the East; and he commanded them to bury him on the hill called Rosnaree, with his face to the sunrise. They disregarded his command, and tried to carry his body across the Boyne to the tumulus; but the water rose and snatched the body from them, and carried it to Rosnaree; and so there it was buried. From Newgrange, one can see the slope of Rosnaree, just across the river; but there is nothing to mark the grave of the greatest of the early kings of Erin.

Round Cormac spring renews her buds;
In march perpetual by his side,
Down come the earth-fresh April floods,
And up the sea-fresh salmon glide.

And life and time rejoicing run
From age to age their wonted way;
But still he waits the risen Sun,
For still 'tis only dawning Day.

The road to the ruins of the abbey of Mellifont runs back from the river, up over the hills, past picturesque villages, through a portion of the Balfour estate, and then dips down into the valley of the Mattock, on whose banks a company of Cistercians, who had come from Clairvaux at the invitation of the Archbishop of Armagh, chose to build their monastery. They called it Mellifont—"Honey Fountain"—and the buildings which they put up were a revelation to the Irish builders, who had been contented with small and unambitious churches, divided only into nave and chancel. Here at Mellifont was erected a great cruciform church, with a semi-circular chapel in each transept, as at Clairvaux; and to this were added cloister and chapter-house and refectory, and a most beautiful octagonal building which was used as a lavatory. It marked, in a word, the introduction of continental elaborations and refinements and luxuries into a land where, theretofore, austerity had been the ruling influence.

That was in 1142, and there is not much left now of that mighty edifice—a portion of the old gate-tower, some fragments of the church, and a little more than half of the octagonal lavatory. Five of its eight sides

remain, and they show how beautiful it must once have been—as you may see from the photograph opposite page 546. Another thing may be seen in that photograph—the corner of a huge, empty, decaying mill, such as dot all Ireland, symbols of her ruined industry!

A clean, pleasant-faced old woman, who opened the gate for us, intimated that we could get lunch at her cottage, which overlooked the ruins; but my companion had brought his lunch in his pocket and presently sat down to eat it, while I made my way alone up to the cottage. There was a long table spread in one room, and while the tea was drawing, I told my hostess and her daughter about my encounter with the bee, and asked if I might have some hot water with which to bathe the sting. They hastened to get me a basin of steaming water and a clean towel, and then they talked together a moment in low tones, and then the old woman came hesitatingly forward.

"If you please, sir," she said, "I have often been told that with a sting or bite or anything of the sort a little blueing in the water works wonders, and indeed I have tried it myself, and have found it very good. Would your honour be trying it, now, if I would get my blueing bag?"

"Why of course I would!" I cried; "and thank you a thousand times for thinking of it!"

Whereupon, her face beaming, she snatched the blueing bag from her daughter, who had it ready, and gave it to me, and I sloshed it around in the basin until the water was quite blue, and bathed my face in it; and whether it was the heat of the water or the blueing I

don't know, but the sting bothered me very little after that, except for the swelling, and that was not so bad as I had feared it would be.

I sat down finally to a delightful lunch of tea and bread and butter and cold meat and jam; and then I got out my pipe and joined my hostess on the bench in front of the house, and her daughter stood in the door and listened, and we had a long talk. As usual, it was first about herself, and then about myself. Her husband was dead and she suffered a great deal from rheumatism, which seems to be the bane of the Irish; but she had her little place, glory be to God, and she picked up a good many shillings in the summer time from visitors to the ruins, though many that came to see them cared nothing for them nor understood them. Indeed, many just came and looked at them over the gate, and then went away again.

And just then I witnessed a remarkable confirmation of this; for a motor-car, with two men and two or three women in it, whirled up the road below and stopped at the gate outside the ruins. My hostess caught up her keys and started hastily down to open it, but before she had taken a dozen steps, the man on the front seat spoke to the chauffeur, and he spun the car around and in another moment it had disappeared down the road in a cloud of dust. I confess that I was hot with anger when my hostess, with a sad little smile, came back and sat down again beside me, for I felt somehow as though she had been affronted.

I went back to the ruins presently, and my new friend came along, finding I was interested, and we spent half an hour wandering about them, while she pointed out

various details which I might otherwise have missed. Next to the lavatory, the most interesting feature of the place is a beautiful pavement of decorated tiles which is preserved in St. Bernard's chapel. The whole church was at one time floored with these tiles, and a few detached ones may still be seen at the base of the pillars. There also remain many details of sculpture which show the loving labour lavished on the place when it was built—the individual work of the artisan, embodying something of his own soul, which gives these old churches a life and beauty sadly wanting in most new ones.

The cemetery is near the bank of the river; but potatoes are raised there now, in a soil made fertile by royal as well as sacred dust; for here Dervorgilla, the false wife of Tiernan O'Rourke, chose to be laid to rest, in the hope, perhaps, that in the crowd of holy abbots and monks which would rise from this place, she might slip into heaven unobserved.

Three miles away from Mellifont stand the ruins of another abbey, centuries older and incomparably greater in its day—an abbey absolutely Irish, with rude, small buildings, but with a giant round-tower and two of the loveliest sculptured crosses in existence on this earth. Monasterboice it is called—Mainister Buithe, the abbey of Boetius—and the way thither lies along a pleasant road, through a wooded valley—which, fertile as it is, is not without its traces of desolation, for we passed more than one vast empty mill, falling to decay. Then, on the slope of a hillside away ahead, we saw the round tower, or what is left of it, for the top of it is broken off, struck by lightning, perhaps. But the

fragment that remains is 110 feet high! And seeing it thus, across the valley, with the low little church nestling at its base, one is inclined to think that Father Dempsey was not altogether wrong when he said he cared nothing about the theories of antiquarians concerning the round towers, for he knew what they were —the forefingers of the early church pointing us all to God.

My companion and I were discussing these theories, when our jarvey saw the opportunity to spring a joke, which I have since discovered to be a time-honoured one.

"Your honours are all wrong," he said, "if you will excuse my sayin' so. It has been proved that the round towers was built by the government."

"Built by the government?" repeated my companion. "How can you prove that?"

"Easy enough, your honour. Seein' they're no manner of use and cost a lot of money, who else could have built them?"

And this, I take it, was his revenge for the Boyne battlefield.

We stopped presently beside a stile leading over the stone wall at the side of the road, and here there was waiting another old woman, to unlock the entrance to the tower. We clambered over the stile and made our way up through the grass-grown, unkempt graveyard, first to the tower—one of the mightiest of these monuments of ancient Erin, for it is seventeen yards around at the base, and tapers gradually toward the top, and the only entrance is a small doorway six feet above the ground; and it takes no great effort of imagination

THE ROUND TOWER, MONASTERBOICE

THE HIGH CROSS, MONASTERBOICE

to fancy the monks clambering wildly up to it, clutching the treasures of the monastery to their bosoms, whenever word came that the raiding Danes were in the neighbourhood. Ladders have been fixed so that one can climb to the top, but we did not essay them.

No trace remains of the monastic buildings which clustered at the tower foot; for, unlike those at Mellifont and in England and on the continent, these were not wrought of stone, but were mere shacks, as in every truly Irish abbey, scarcely strong enough to screen from wind and weather the groups of scholars who gathered to study here. They lived a strait and austere life, and the only permanent structures they built were the churches. Here, as usual, they were small, the largest one being only forty feet in length; and the walls that remain prove how bare and mean they must have looked beside the carved and columned splendours of Mellifont.

But Monasterboice has one glory, or rather two, beside which those that remain at Mellifont are as nothing; and these are the huge Celtic crosses, the most perfect and beautiful in the land. One of them is tall and slender and the other is short and sturdy, and both are absolute masterpieces.

The high cross, as the tall one is called, stands near the tower-foot and close beside the crumbling wall of one of the old churches. It is twenty-seven feet high, and is composed of three stones, the shaft, the cross with its binding circle, and the cap. The shaft, which is about two feet square and eighteen feet high, is divided into seven compartments on either face, and in each of them is an elaborately-sculptured representa-

tion of some Bible scene, usually with three figures. Although much worn, it is still possible easily to decipher some of them, for there is Eve accepting the apple from the serpent while Adam looks mildly on, and here they are fleeing from Paradise before the angel with the flaming sword, and next Cain is hitting Abel on the head with a club while a third unidentified person watches the scene without offering to interfere. At the crossing there is a splendid crucifixion, with the usual crowded heaven and hell to left and right; the binding circle is beautifully ornamented with an interlacing design; and the cap-stone represents one of those high-pitched cells or churches, such as we saw at Killaloe and Glendalough.

Beautiful as this cross is, it is surpassed by the other one, Muiredach's Cross, from the inscription about its base: "A prayer for Muiredach for whom this cross was made." That inscription gives us its date, at least within a century, for two Muiredachs were abbots here. One of them died in 844 and the other in 924, and as the latter was the richer and more distinguished, it is presumed that the cross is his. That would make its age almost exactly ten centuries.

And yet, in spite of those ten centuries, the sculptures which enrich it from top to bottom are as beautiful to-day as they ever were. Look at the picture opposite this page—it is not my picture, though I took one, but there is an iron fence about the cross now which spoils every recent photograph—and you will see what a wonderful thing it is. It is a monolith—one single stone, fifteen feet high and six feet across the arms—and every inch of it is covered with ornamentation.

MUIREDACH'S CROSS, MONASTERBOICE

It is the western face the picture shows, with the crucifixion occupying its usual position. Below it are three panels of extraordinary interest, for they show Irish warriors and clerics in the costumes of the period, all of them wearing fierce mustachios. In the upper panel are three clerics in flowing robes, the central one giving a book to one of his companions and a staff to the other; in the central panel are three ecclesiastics each holding a book; and in the lower panel a cleric in a long cloak, caught together at the throat with a brooch, stands staff in hand between two soldiers armed with Danish swords. At the foot of the shaft two dogs lie head to head.

On the other side, the central panel shows Christ sitting in judgment, with a joyous devil kicking a damned soul into an already-crowded hell. The method of separating the blessed from the damned is shown just below, where a figure is carefully weighing souls in a pair of scales—a subject familiar to every one who has visited the Gothic cathedrals of France, where almost invariably a devil is trying to cheat by crouching below the scales and pulling down one side. The lower panels in the cross represent the usual Scriptural subjects—the fall of man, the expulsion from Eden, the adoration of the magi, and so on; and again at the base there are two dogs, only this time they are playing, and one is holding the other by the ear. All of this sculpture is done with spirit, with taste and with fine artistry; and another glory of the cross is the elaborate tracery of the side panels, and of the front, back, inside and outside of the circle. Of this, the photograph gives a better notion than any description could.

Who was he? Was he sad or glad
Who knew to carve in such a fashion?

Those questions we may never answer. All we can say certainly is that he was a great artist; and his is the artist's reward:

But he is dust; we may not know
His happy or unhappy story:
Nameless, and dead these centuries,
His work outlives him,—there's his glory!

We tore ourselves away at last from the contemplation of this consummate masterpiece, and drove slowly back to Drogheda, through a beautiful and fertile country, which, save for the thatched cottages, and gorse-crowned walls and hedges, did not differ greatly in appearance from my own. And I was very happy, for it had been a perfect day. Nowhere else in Ireland is it possible to crowd so much of loveliness and interest into so short a space. All unwittingly, I had saved the best for the last.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE END OF THE PILGRIMAGE

I CAN imagine no greater contrast to the quiet and peaceful valley of the Boyne than was Belfast that night. The Orangemen had already begun to celebrate King Billy's victory, and were practising for the great demonstration of the twelfth, when England was to be shown, once for all and in a manner unmistakable, that Ulster was in earnest.

As I came up on the tram from the station, we ran into a mob of people, marching along in the middle of the street and yelling at the tops of their voices, and we had to wait until they had passed. I asked a fellow-passenger what was going on, and he answered with a little smile that the Orange societies had all been given new banners that night and were flinging them to the breeze for the first time. I asked him who had given the banners, and he said he didn't know.

At the hotel, I found that Betty had sought the sanctuary of our room, and was watching the tumult from the window. She said it reminded her of the French Revolution, and the comparison was natural enough. The especial scene she had in mind, I think, was that draggled procession of shrieking fishwives which escorted the king and his family in from Versailles.

I do not know how many Orange societies there are at Belfast, but we saw at least a dozen march past

that night, each of them headed by a band or drum-corps, and each with a bright new Orange banner flaunting proudly in the breeze. Each banner bore a painted representation of some Orange victory; King Billy on his white horse fording the Boyne being a favourite subject; and the banners were very large and fringed with gold lace and most expensive-looking; and before them and beside them and behind them trailed a mob of shrieking girls and women and ragamuffin boys, locked arm and arm half across the street, breaking into a clumsy dance now and then, or shouting the lines of some Orange ditty. There were many men in line, marching along more or less soberly; but these bacchantes outnumbered them two to one. They blocked the street from side to side, stopped traffic, and conducted themselves as though they had suddenly gone mad.

Presently all the societies, which had been collecting at some rendezvous, marched back together, with the mob augmented a hundred-fold, so that, looking down from our window, we could see nothing but a mass of heads filling the street from side to side—thousands and thousands of women and girls and boys, all vociferous with a frenzied intoxication—and in the midst of them the thin stream of Orangemen trudging along behind their banners.

I went down into the street to view this demonstration more closely, for it was evident that here at last was the spirit of Ulster unveiled for all to see; but at close quarters much of its impressiveness vanished, for the mob was composed largely of boys and girls out for a good time, and rejoicing in the unaccustomed

privilege of yelling and hooting to their hearts' content. A few policemen would have been quite capable of dealing with that portion of it. But the men marching grimly along behind their banners were of different stuff; they were ready, apparently, for any emergency, ready for a holy war; and I wondered if their leaders, who had sown the wind so blithely as part of the game of politics, were quite prepared to reap the whirlwind which might follow.

A man with whom I fell into talk said there would be a procession like this every evening until the twelfth; but I should think the drummers would be exhausted long before that. I have described the contortions of the Dublin drummers, but they are nowhere as compared with the drummers of Belfast. And, though about a fourth of Belfast's population is Catholic, you would never have suspected it that night, for there was no disorder of any kind, except the wild disorder of the Orangemen and their adherents. I suspect that, in Belfast, wise Catholics spend the early evenings of July at home.

We went out, next morning, to Ardoyne village, to see one of the few establishments where linen is still woven by hand. A beautiful old factory it is, with the work-rooms grouped around an open court which reminded us of the Plantin-Moretus at Antwerp; and the Scotchman in charge of it took us through from top to bottom. I have forgotten how many looms there are—some thirty or forty; and it was most interesting to watch the weavers as they shot the shuttle swiftly back and forth with one hand and worked the heavy

beam with the other, while with their feet they controlled the pattern. Nearly all the weavers were old men, and our guide told us it was growing more and more difficult to replace them, because hand-weaving had been so largely displaced by machine-work that it was rapidly becoming a lost art. Few young men were willing to undertake the long apprenticeship which was necessary before they could become expert weavers, and he foresaw the time when hand-weaving would cease altogether.

Then we went upstairs, where the pattern mechanism is mounted above each loom; and though I understood it, in a way, after long and careful explanation, I am quite incapable of explaining it to anybody else, except to say that the threads which run down to the loom below are governed by a lot of stiff cards laced together into a long roll, and cut with many perforations, so that the roll looks something like the music-rolls used in mechanical piano-players.

Last of all we were shown some of the finished product, and very beautiful it was, strong as iron—far stronger than machine-woven linen, for the shuttle can be thrown by hand more often to the inch than is possible by machine; and some of the patterns, too, were very lovely; one, in especial, from the Book of Kells, the interwoven Celtic ornamentation, the symbol of eternity.

Of course we talked about Home Rule, and our Scotch host, who was evidently a devoted Orangeman, was very certain Ulster would fight before she would acquiesce. If the fight went against her, he prophesied that no Protestant industry which could get out of

Ireland would stay to be taxed out of existence by a Dublin Parliament, and he said that many of the great factories had already secured options on English sites, and were prepared to move at any time.

I remarked that it seemed to me the wiser plan would be to wait and see how Home Rule worked before plunging into revolution; then, if it was found that Ulster was really oppressed, it would be time enough for her army to take the field. And I told him something of what I had seen and heard in the south and west of Ireland—that, among all the people I had talked with, not one had expressed himself with any bitterness toward Ulster, and that many had said frankly that the leaders of the Irish people would be largely Protestant in the future, just as they had been in the past. But he was unconvinced, and very gloomy over the outlook.

We came away finally, and took a last look about Belfast—at the busy streets, the bright shops, the humming factories, the clattering foundries; and then the hour of departure came. The jarvey who drove us to the boat was a jovial, loquacious son of the Church, with good-natured laughter for Orange excesses.

"Why should we Catholics interfere wid them?" he asked. "We'd only be gettin' our heads broke, and all the papers would be full of the riots in Ulster. Sure, haven't I seen them before this treatin' a small fight at the corner as though it was a revolution? No, no; we'll just stay quiet and let them have their fun. It does good to them and no harm to us. They'll settle down again when the Home Rule bill is passed, and then we'll be Irishmen all, please God!"

From the bottom of my heart I said I hoped so. Indeed, I can think of no better watch-word to replace "No Surrender!" and curses on King Billy and the Pope than "Irishmen All!"

There are few busier ports than Belfast, and we made our way down to the quay through a tangle of drays that would have done no discredit to the New York water-front; and at last we found our boat and got aboard. And presently the ropes were cast off, and we steamed slowly down the river, between long lines of lofty scaffolding shrouding the hulls of scores of mighty ships, one day to play their part in the commerce of the world.

And then we were in Belfast Lough, with the grim keep of Carrickfergus looming on the western shore; and then the bay widened, the shores dropped away, and we headed out across the white-capped waters of the Irish Sea. For long and long in the distance, we could see the purple masses of the Antrim hills, growing fainter and ever fainter, until at last they merged into the purple of the western sky. And so we looked our last upon the Island of the Saints.

THE END

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